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The
HUMAN VENTURE
in
Sex, Love, *and*
Marriage

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The HUMAN VENTURE *in* Sex, Love, *and* Marriage

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To my sons

PETER, STEPHEN, *and* RICHARD

I say again that daily to discourse about virtue, and of these other things about which you hear me examining myself and others, is the greatest good of man, and that the unexamined life is not worth living.

When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them, and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing—then reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about what they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing.

—PLATO, *The Apology of Socrates*

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Preface

I SUPPOSE that one of the outstanding characteristics of American young people is their conviction that anything is all right unless there is a good reason for objecting. Human desires are not bad simply because they are human. If man is sinful, it is not because anything is innately wrong with him, but because he has not organized desires and abilities in a way to insure proper satisfaction. Thus, the young American faces the inhibitions with which his parents would like to harness him with the question: What's bad about it? If petting is bad, why? If sexual expression is bad, why? If promiscuity is bad, why? At any rate, it is to persons in this frame of mind that these essays are addressed.

I confess that whatever philosophical experience may be mine would shy away from the task of attempting an answer to these and related questions were it not that young people have themselves helped to frame many of the suggestions which I have here put together. One conviction stands out above all others as a result of discussion with high school, college, and young married people:

they are at sea on the contribution that sex should make to their experience. That there is a great deal of free sexual expression is a fact, but that there is little confidence in such a solution to a vexing problem is also clear. Whether they abstain or not, they are seldom smug about the adequacy of their decisions. These young people can talk more freely than their elders could, and more of them are earlier informed about the "facts" of sex, but my conviction is that there is no real enlightenment as to the part sex can and should play in life; indeed their freedom has tended to blind them to the potentialities of sex and love and to bar them from entering into an experience in which sex becomes a source and symbol of profound joy. Marriage for them is important, but it seldom gets clarification in their thinking.

These chapters are addressed to young people who want to work out, as far as possible, a reasoned answer to their questions and doubts, who want to satisfy the rational urge to understand and not merely rationalize their strongest desires. What is here suggested is by no means the final word about either sex or love; the reader is immediately warned to keep his thinking cap adjusted. All I can offer is an interpretation which, I hope, takes adequate account of the main facts and meanings of sex and love in human experience.

I wish I could say that we, any of us, really understood sex and love, or that we know all we need to know about either. Yet, each of us must go on living, making choices in this realm. Our choices can be made impulsively or with some understanding of the values and disvalues involved. This essay, then, is intended to crystallize thinking on issues which each of us must face if we are to be reason-

able in our adjustment. The effort here is to bring into fairly brief compass, with as little technicality as possible, what seems to me to be the indispensable minimum as a basis for further reading and reflection.

The main question, in the last analysis, is one of comparative values. The choices we make are affected by the values we consider worth-while, by the ideal of character and personality envisioned. Anyone who does not care about the pattern of his life and conduct, beyond getting what he wants when he wants it, had better read no further; almost everything which follows seeks to understand the problems of sex, love, and marriage as parts of the total search for value in life. This is not a psychology of sex and love although it leans heavily on what are deemed to be psychological truths. It is concerned primarily not with the pattern of behavior individuals are exhibiting in our own or other cultures, but with the paths of action worth following if life is to realize the highest values in sex, love, and marriage. This, then, is a philosophy, that without neglecting the physiological, psychological, and sociological facts, sees sex and love in the context of life as a whole; it is an essay in right and wrong.

The careful reader will, however, note what may well seem to be a serious omission in the present psycho-ethical approach. I have nowhere made an appeal to religious conviction or doctrine to support my analysis. This is not because I consider such an appeal ultimately unimportant. On the contrary, a person who believes that God is constantly doing all he can to enrich and dignify the lives of men, and who consistently accepts his personal responsibility to co-operate with God in every way possible, finds his daily existence transformed by a sense of purpose and

an inner joy which permeate and increase all his other values. Such a person will have both responsibilities and resources in living that other persons do not have—and they are far from insignificant in the area of sex, love, and marriage. At any rate, this is my conviction. But it is also my conviction that one cannot love God intelligently and do his will intelligently without insight into the experiences of men. Thus, we cannot know whether we are taking the right attitude toward sex, love, and marriage until we understand the kind of problems human beings actually face in these areas. Furthermore, whether one believes in God or not, there are certain considerations that must be faced honestly if one desires to choose his values wisely. It is these considerations I am concerned with here.

In this essay I am also concerned about a certain omission in much contemporary thinking about these problems, an omission which may help to account for the inner conflicts of many young college people especially. For with all our psychologizing we have put our fingers on the part rather than the whole. Being clearer ourselves about biological, psychological, and sociological aspects of sex, love, and marriage, we have been relatively silent on the positive values that sex, love, and marriage can contribute to human existence. We have not begun to articulate adequately the relation of these aspects of human experience to a philosophy of life as a whole although our own individual philosophies have played an all too unconscious part in our interpretation of the facts.

The recent Kinsey study, which restricts itself almost entirely to the biological behavior of the human male, is a provocative reminder of these facts. As we shall find occasion to note, the *quality* of sexual relations was strin-

gently neglected as the scientist assembled his quantitative findings. We cannot, to be sure, neglect the facts about the actual sexual behavior of human beings; and we cannot but welcome the degree of accuracy here introduced into a very difficult area of investigation. But the *qualitative values* of sex and love are also facts, and their significance in human life is not determined by the number of people who are satisfying their sexual desires a certain number of times through certain patterns of behavior. Because these qualitative values of sex are not so easily measured, the temptation is to suppose that the quantitative frequencies are the really important facts, and to think that we can understand the value of sex by knowing the manner and frequency of sexual expression. Science, at its best, is not ethics. The sciences of life and human relations cannot tell us what the value of life is though they can provide us with many of the facts needed to support reasonable conclusions.

On the other hand, philosophical moralists have seldom found it possible or desirable to articulate their moral convictions in terms of what is known or suggested by their colleagues in the social, psychological, and biological sciences. They have accordingly provided us with general principles to guide action but have not indicated clearly the relation of their principles to the actual psychological tendencies and problems in the lives of the human beings. If this essay succeeds at all in bringing together significant "facts" and "values" in sex, love, and marriage, a major objective will have been realized.

It is to the many young people who have shared their experience and reflections with me that I am mainly obligated throughout this discussion. The challenge of their

concrete problems and their sincere desire to work out a reasoned solution has been with me for years now. But there are many friends and colleagues whose broader experience and wisdom have been felt in shaping the emphasis. To Dr. Joseph D'Alfonso of Bates College, and to my colleagues Professor Warren O. Ault, Professor Mervyn J. Bailey, Professor Herbert D. Lamson, Professor Frank Nowak, and Professor Wayland F. Vaughan, I am grateful for needed counsel and encouragement. My closest collaborators were Gordon W. Allport of Harvard University and Edgar S. Brightman of Boston University; the reader would enjoy a better treatment had I been wise enough always to follow their acute suggestions. To my brother Angelo and to my wife there remains that debt which can be enjoyed but not expressed.

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The Significance of Petting in Adolescence

> *Sex, then, must fall within the life of personality, and be an expression of love. . . .*
>
> *And the law of reality in the relationship of persons is this: "The integrity of persons is inviolable. You shall not use a person for your own ends, or indeed for any ends, individual or social. To use another person is to violate his personality by making an object of him; and in violating the integrity of another you violate your own."*
>
> —JOHN MACMURRAY, *Reason and Emotion*

The Psychological Setting in Adolescence

Is ANYTHING wrong with petting? The answer to this question cannot be given without an understanding of the life situations in which the desire to pet occurs. We must ask first why persons want to pet or to be petted. The following sketch is meant to suggest, but by no means to exhaust, the basic problem a person confronts at adolescence.

The youngster approaching and passing through puberty is undergoing not only physical but emotional and intellectual changes. The long-awaited growing up is frequently not the wonderful experience one might imagine. The nice-looking boy and the pretty little girl may well find themselves becoming gawky and in many other re-

spects less attractive. If an adolescent could only anticipate the specific consequences of this change, it might be easier, but who knows what will actually happen? Along with the promise or the threat of these physical alterations, the adolescent also experiences the new emotions and feelings that attend these changes. The greater capacity for critical thinking which now appears forces a different perspective on experience. Thus, the externally changing body is a symbol of an even more intensive development of mind and "outlooking."

The bodily patterns which are being reshaped and readjusted are in fact small and insignificant when contrasted with the challenging development and reorganization required as the boy and girl enter a new world of responsibility and expectancy. Perhaps even to the adolescent himself the physical change may seem most pronounced. However, the presence of increased thinking ability and emotional sensitivity is evidenced by the questions and doubts he has, by the heightened desire to make a good appearance, by a demand for greater independence and a different kind of loving from adults, by a wondering about his career and vocational problems, by a renewed interest in the nature of the world and of God, and by the desire to be surer about right and wrong and the reasons for the customary modes of conduct.

In this physical, mental, and emotional world where the old landmarks are being shaken, it is not surprising that the adolescent, other things being equal, moves closer to members of his own age or gang. Their problems are his problems, and he is much more likely to find sympathetic understanding of "just the kind I want," from those in his own age group (although, if the truth

be known, he will be just crazy about his parents if they can only be his pals as well as his caretakers). The realities of the situation are that he must fit himself into the group with which he will compete and co-operate the rest of his life. Much as he may want the approval and encouragement of his parents as he moves into these more critical relations with his peers, the main sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction are his adventures with "the fellows" and with "the girls." The reflections of himself which he catches in their eyes are usually as important, if not more important, than those he sees in his parents' eyes. His fellows are his gallery, and, consciously or unconsciously, he is playing before them. At school, at play, in social organizations, and in all competitive relations, he is anxious about the impression he creates in their eyes. Here he is, with certain physical, intellectual, and emotional abilities and desires. How can he build them into an effective, dependable source of satisfaction?

It is in this context that we must study the meaning of sex in the adolescent. We must keep several facts in mind with regard to his attitude toward sex.

As the youngster moved through childhood he probably developed certain attitudes toward sex. A child, apart from the attitude that he catches from his family and friends, frequently has experiences involving sex, and these leave their mark on his emotional attitude toward sex. Especially when the child does not understand the meaning of these experiences and does not feel free to talk about them with someone he trusts, he is likely to imagine consequences that are farfetched and fantastic. Sex may be endowed with possibilities having no relation to the facts, for the child may put together snatches of

conversation, warnings, and experiences in a way that makes sense to his imaginative mind. He may therefore grow up with misconceptions and emotional attitudes that hinder adequate understanding and adjustment. The importance of parental guidance in the understanding of sexual growth and experience cannot be overemphasized; a child needs as much day-to-day thoughtful and unemotional discussion of questions involving sex as of any other problem.[1]

However, the emotional experience of sex at puberty is new, much as these attitudes and experiences may now color the adolescent's attitude toward these changes. Assume what we cannot usually assume, that earlier experiences, understanding, and attitudes are normal and healthy. Each adolescent, stimulated by the physiological changes which take place, finds himself trying to understand what the significance of these changes are. The ap-

[1] In this essay I am assuming that what Freudians say about "infantile sexuality" is not to be considered *the truth* about the normal experience of children. Let this statement invalidate the rest of this discussion, as I know it may for some, but I must confess serious doubts about the validity of the Freudian hypotheses as general descriptions of the sex life of children. I rather assume that, even if there are serious emotional disturbances in relation to the sexual aspects of life before the onset of puberty, these do not have to be controlling factors forever fixing the course of the love life. The growing individual may re-form the course of his life as he moves along into it, the degree of plasticity always being an individual problem. Whatever the development has been, I am asserting that the adolescent usually faces his past adjustments anew in the light of his adolescent "field." Even Kinsey, after saying: "For all boys, the experience of preadolescence, whether directly continued or not, must provide considerable conditioning which encourages or inhibits their sexual development in adolescent and in more adult years," goes on to recognize that biological and psychological factors at adolescence mark a change in attitude toward sex. It becomes an end in itself and not simply a part of his more sporadic play life. (Cf. Alfred C. Kinsey, W. B. Pomeroy, and C. E. Martin: *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male,* Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948, pp. 182, 183.)

pearance of hair on the body, the changes in bodily form, and more specifically, the beginning and continuance of menstrual periods in the girl, or the occasional flow of sperm from the turgid penis of the boy when, perhaps in a dream, his sexual emotion runs high—all these changes and others in the most normal of adolescents become occasions for increased interest not only in himself but in differences from others of his sex and especially from the other sex. He or she may be more or less satisfied with at least the external effects of adolescent development, but in any case this new emotion is something to conjure with. The girl finds herself no longer simply the object of casual interest to everybody, least of all to her girl friends and the boys. Both boy and girl find that being attractive now means an ability one possesses—that curious, vague, and powerful "it"—to stimulate avid interest in a member of the other sex. In himself the adolescent discovers a strong desire to be with and near a person of the opposite sex, a desire to caress and be caressed, a desire to explore the nature of that mind and body.

I am saying that even if there were no specifically new push about the sex urge itself, the normal curiosity of a growing boy and girl would itself be manifested, along with other normal desires to be liked and appreciated, in what we normally call petting and sex play. Indeed, has the adolescent not noted—as my eight-year-old has already noted—that adults make an awful lot of this boy-and-girl business? How many social conventions, let alone comics and movies, have paraded the fact that men and women are of special interest to each other, that they play some sort of unique role in each others' lives, that rivalry and "playing your cards right" are very important aspects of

the man-woman struggle. Valentine's Day marks our devotion to the art of courtship. Both boy and girl realize that, if they are to take their parent's action-words for it anyway, they must learn to please each other not only as one boy pleases another, but in some other specially alluring way. Before he experiences any special urge to participate in such rivalry, the adolescent has already been introduced to a pattern of action between men and women that he somehow must imitate as he grows up.

Add to this awareness of the social pattern the inner emotional impulsion of lust, and the psychological stage is set for petting. (We use the perfectly good word lust to indicate the unique emotion which attends sexual excitement and stimulation. It is unfortunate that this word has had derogatory moral associations, but we shall use it without desiring to condemn the emotion which our reader's introspection will define when sexual excitement is high. And we shall use the combination sex lust to differentiate this experience of urgent sexual excitement from the broader experience of sex love, of which sex lust is a part). Having said these things, we are still aware of the injustice done to the complexity of the interlacing factors constantly at play in the life of the adolescent (and in the life of most adults for that matter). The sexual desire of the adolescent not only seeks its own satisfaction, but it ties in with the desire to show his prowess, with his capacity to hold others in a position of deference or subservience to him. It sparks his desire to be needed, for if he is needed by others, or if others depend upon him, then he can find greater assurance of his own satisfaction.

Enticements to Petting

With this background we are ready to understand some of the more specific causes of petting in the maturing adult (and, with adequate allowance, in older human beings). We must remember, however, that these enticements rarely act separately, and that every individual will belie the description here suggested to some extent. By petting, I mean all forms of mutual bodily stimulation (from holding hands on) short of sexual intercourse.

1. Petting is in itself a pleasant experience. At the moment of excitement it is always pleasanter to give in to a desire than to leave it unsatisfied, and sex lust is no exception. Thus, assuming that John wants to kiss Mary, it is much more pleasant to do it than not. He may feel unpleasant when he reflects on the experience or after twinges of conscience make themselves felt, but there is no doubt about the intrinsic pleasantness of any sexual experience, other things being equal. It may seem ridiculous even to have to be explicit about this. But it is all too easy to think that because some of the consequences of petting are unpleasant that petting itself is unpleasant. Persons pet because they enjoy stimulating and being stimulated physically, especially if lust is experienced.

2. While there is no doubt of the sheer physiological pleasure caused by petting, it seems to me that we have tended to overlook another type of pleasure yielded by the tactual sensations involved in caressing. This is the aesthetic pleasure which cannot, of course, be completely disentangled from the sexual pleasure. But I hardly think that we shall understand the hold that petting has on human beings unless we allow for the enjoyment of beauty

that is a by-product of so many of our visual, auditory, and tactual sensations and of our experiences of taste and smell. The sexual life of the individual, certainly no less than his eating and drinking life, is inextricably tied in with touches, smells, colors, movements, and sounds that are in themselves, apart from the hunger being satisfied, a source of delight. Thus, to say that a human being pets because of sex, is to oversimplify the nature of the experiences he actually has (other things being equal). Can we underestimate these experiences when we witness the connection between music, the dance, and the life of romance and sex? Indeed, the presence of these other enjoyments frequently forms the basis for rationalizing petting.

3. Closely related to these aesthetic motives is the emotion of tenderness. The tenderness that human beings feel for each other is not completely enjoyed without expression, and petting is a ready outlet. Sympathy also is an emotional spring of petting. Someone has said that "no one can ever love or be loved enough." When John and Mary feel a mutual kinship through each other's problems, petting becomes a meaningful expression of that experience of mutuality.

4. Nor can we minimize the urge of curiosity and exploration (which easily becomes exploitation) as a psychological cause of petting. The action reveals not only the nature of the opposite sex and the reaction of that particular person, but also one's own capacities for response. It would be queer, indeed, if the individual were not anxious to know about himself and the sexual nature of others. Allowing for rationalization, there is still point to the remark of the adolescent who said that he wanted to make sure, from time to time, that he was like other fellows.

5. Here we have a hint of probably the strongest motive that ties in with sexual appetite as a basis for petting. Breathes there a girl or boy with ego so dead as never to want assurance and reassurance that he or she is "kissable?" Is it not normal human experience to hope that someone wants to kiss you, that you are desirable to someone? And when that someone is the person whom many of one's peers also find desirable or make a lot of, is it queer that an adolescent should want to boast that he (or she) too had made the grade? Witness a woman between the age of thirty and forty who gets whistled at, or whom some young man tries to pick up, and you note a person whose immediate annoyance is also accompanied by a sigh of relief that someone is still attracted! The high-school boy or girl, let alone the collegiate, who is not dating or being asked for dates is usually having a fit, and adding to his prayers accordingly! And a date that proceeds from doorway to movie to doorway without even an advance is certainly something to think about—and she thinks about it!—unless she had already decided that he's a "drip." Thus, the art of enticing or being enticed becomes a real concern, not simply because of the sexual pleasure, but because the adolescent wants to know that he is at least holding his own. So, even if he didn't want to pet, he finds himself petting or at least creating a situation in which it is possible (with almost inevitable results) simply to maintain his status in his own eyes, let alone the group's.

6. This situation leads to a social pattern of action by which, to listen to the adolescent's version, he is inextricably bound: "If I don't pet, then I don't get a date." Hence the mores or pattern of expected behavior within the adolescent group becomes an influential, initiating

factor in petting. If everybody else is doing it, and if one is in danger of losing face or place in the group simply because of a little petting, why fuss about it? Why not be a good sport, regardless of private conviction, and participate in experiences that aren't particularly harmful surely and that give pleasure anyway? To stickle at a little kissing is simply to be taking life too seriously and to be stuffy. Besides, once advances are made, it hurts the other's feelings, and who wants to go with someone who makes you feel silly or small? Thus petting begins, and once the stimulation has its psychological effect on either or both individuals, it no longer needs the "be-a-sport" motive; it continues on the sex lust impetus frequently much further than either person intended.

These last two interacting causes of petting are potent enough in themselves, for any normal youth wants the status in his group which assures dates. But when that youth is on the margin of his group, uncertain of his acceptance or feeling, and intensely conscious of the competition of others who seem to be getting the dates, he or she is tempted to invite petting as the compensating feature or prize which will make up for any other deficiencies. Whether it actually works this way or not in all instances is another matter, but that petting is used as a means of "holding" one's date is certainly true. For many young people and adults who are frustrated and unsuccessful in other normal human pursuits, the sexual life, both in its own right and as an outlet for other desires and feelings, offers a tempting alternative.

We have now suggested, all too briefly, central and different interacting ways in which the inner psychophysiological sex tension may actually come home to the adoles-

cent in this transitional period. The new potentialities of his inner life—novel, mysterious, demanding, pleasure-promising—would be a problem, all by themselves, to understand and to control. But mingle them with the aesthetic and the social; bind them to the struggle for admiration, recognition, social power, and security; warm them by the experience of tenderness; allow them to be methods of controlling the interests of others in oneself, and you have the web of causes which operate with unexperienced force in adolescence and continue to make themselves felt in adulthood.

To have stated some of these causes is to realize at once the ranging effects that petting may produce in the adolescent's adjustment to himself and to others and the difficulty of pursuing a wise course. The desires involved, which spur each other into action, are each of them the very same desires that can and do enrich human existence. The adolescent is seldom sufficiently conscious of this interaction among his desires, and he frequently misunderstands his own motives. But he is even less likely to be clear about the effects of today's actions. His impulses are so strong, his experience and wisdom are so limited, that it is easy for him to feel that what is so strong and natural must be all right. If he does foresee possible undesirable consequences, it is easy for him to underestimate them since he probably knows his strength better than his weakness.

Thus his challenge—Why not pet?—is not a simple evasion. It testifies to a greater assurance of the immediate values sex expression can yield, and less understanding of the reasons why his course should be carefully controlled. He cannot see why sex should get *him* into the trouble to which adults refer, especially if they do not indicate ex-

actly what this trouble may be in *his* life. Unless he is clearer about the possible ill effects of petting than he is about the desirability of petting, he may well decide to stumble along, hoping that experience will be a clearer teacher than his parents. Indeed, unless he is led to clarify some of the other goals he needs to realize for his life as a whole, and to see the specific connection between petting and these, he will decide to take his chances. And it is hard for most young people, as it is for their elders, to realize that experience may not always be a good teacher. Thus, if John and Mary are to be encouraged to help themselves, they must see more clearly the manner in which their adjustment to sex may affect their lives as a whole.

The Goal of Sexual Adjustment in Adolescence

I have been emphasizing the fact that the sexual urge is a powerful drive that interacts with other equally significant aspects of life.[2] Peculiar to its expression, however, is the fact that it immediately involves an intimate relation to the privacy of a member of the opposite sex. It involves the manipulation of another's body for the sake of immediate gratification of one's desire, and without thought of the future. The sex drive not only will affect the exercise of other desires in one's life, but it will have a great

[2] Professor Gordon W. Allport in his masterly work, *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation,* pp. 187, 188, states: "Biological motives never operate singly. Sex in normal lives never stands alone; it is tied to all manner of personal images, sanctions, tastes, interests, ambitions, codes, and ideals. To put the case as crisply as possible, sexuality in its stark biological simplicity is segmental in the organism, often insistent but never devoid of mental ramifications; in these ramifications it is indeed pervasive, but it is no longer mere sexuality; it becomes diffused into the major systems of interests and traits which are themselves the *fundamental* structural and functional systems of personality."

influence on the life of the partner in sexual expression and, thereby, on those who care about or depend upon that person. John may not realize it, but both his peers and adults will esteem him more as they find that he can be trusted to control his sexual desire to a degree consistent with their sense of security. Indeed, John's and Mary's own self-confidence and self-esteem will be seriously affected by the degree of confidence they have in their ability to act as considerate and trustworthy members of society. In most of the relationships, in school, in social organizations, at work, and as members of a society in which men and women mingle more and more freely, John and Mary will meet members of the opposite sex. The degree of ease and confidence with which they meet and co-operate with others in the tasks at hand will always be influenced by their inner attitude toward the meaning, function, and control of sex. And their devotion and wisdom as husband and wife, their capacity to evoke eager smiles rather than resigned forbearance, will be a partial product of the kind of confidence they feel in regard to sex and its expression.

Here, it seems to me, we have reached the goal and aim of adequate sex *education* (as opposed to instruction). Just as the goal of physical education is to train the individual to take those attitudes and exercises that will prepare the body for the varied demands of life, so the goal of sex education must be to build those attitudes, based on solid physiological knowledge, that will enable the individual to enjoy the deepest and most fruitful meaning of his sexual powers in human relationships. Just as he needs to learn how to control his acquisitive tendencies in a way that will set other people at ease even as he acquires his

own financial independence, so he needs to control his sexual wants in a manner that inspires others to feel that he would not take advantage of their weaknesses.

When I speak of the *control* of sex I mean a *positive attitude* toward sex. Control does not mean inhibition as such; nor does it mean expression as such. A baseball pitcher who has control, for example, pitches each ball as demanded by the total situation his team confronts. Control, accordingly, means that *kind* of expression, that kind of inhibition, if you will, that makes it possible for the individual to enter with confidence into any of the relationships of life where sexual expression makes a difference to the growth and happiness of those concerned. With this goal in mind we now turn to basic facts and problems that the adolescent needs to ponder as he determines his attitude toward sexual expression.

Two underlying facts, it seems to me, call for special emphasis. First, the adolescent needs to realize that the expression of the sexual impulse, while it brings immediate pleasure, will not in itself make control easier another time. Nor am I referring simply to the habit of giving in to the urge, serious as that is. The fact seems to be (other things being equal) that the physical expression of sex that satisfies desire at one stage of petting will not for long be thrilling. The individual will soon find himself requiring further stimulation to experience the same degree of satisfaction received earlier. The thrill that came several weeks ago just from holding hands is now impossible without kissing, and the degree of satisfaction derived from kissing is soon not experienced unless caressing of the body follows. Thus, the individual is tempted to move from one rung of the ladder of satisfaction to

another. Since the next rung will not yield the satisfaction and release of tension earlier experienced at this stage, he will be gradually led (if he is not willing to forgo further satisfaction) to the point where no action short of sexual intercourse itself is physically and psychologically satisfying. I shall refer to this progression as the *sexual progression.*

This sexual progression, be it understood, is not a sequence of events to which the adolescent *must* succumb once he has taken any step in it. It simply represents the problem that any person is bound to be faced with once he decides that petting is all right. It is stressed here because it is a very seductive aspect of experience, and many are those who have been ensnared by ignorance of it, or by belittling its consequences. How frequently young people, who in principle would disavow the desirability, short of marriage, of the sexual act itself, think that they are protecting themselves from going too far by petting (see the appendix to this chapter). As a matter of fact, by so doing they are usually advancing the point of tension release and therewith the problem of control. Once petting extends to the stimulation of the sexual organs themselves, not only do the individuals concerned frequently find it impossible to keep past resolves, but they face a future in which frustration is increased unless sexual intercourse becomes the order of the day.

There can be no adequate, realistic, and individualized sex education that does not bring the young man and young woman face to face with this sexual progression and the problems it creates. Many young people are so sure that there's nothing wrong with a little petting, and, on the contrary that something might go wrong with them

if they do not indulge in petting at all, that only too late do they realize that petting produces its own problems. Many a youth, already stimulated by a normal desire, is deceived into thinking that "this will be the last time," or that "this won't go any further," because he does not realize that he is bucking a psychological fact of his nature. *To express sex is not to free oneself from it but to encourage a stronger grip. Expression does not build up tolerance against further stimulation, but reduces it.* The youth who might normally be aware that he is rationalizing his desire is in fact frequently surprised to discover a *fait accompli* that actually causes him more conflict and trouble than the satisfaction was worth. One should not be naive enough to think that such knowledge alone would necessarily keep the excited person from walking into this psychological trap. But if we presuppose his determination to sacrifice immediate pleasures for the sake of more satisfying experiences, then knowledge of this fact will help him to determine more intelligently the policy he needs to develop about the satisfaction of his sexual desire.

As a matter of fact, the importance of this psychological progression is readily revealed by chats with not a few young people of college age. The young man or woman who becomes habituated to advanced forms of stimulation, and now realizes his predicament, no longer relishes the dates he might otherwise anticipate with great enjoyment. For he or she is aware that it will not be long after the date begins that the battle for composure and control ensues. What was supposed to be an evening of fun turns out to be an evening of tension and conflict. Sex life becomes a problem, and occasions for normal friendship with members of the opposite sex become psychological

and moral battlefields in which the young person feels that he is a nuisance not only to himself but to others. The price of resolving sexual tensions is a series of ramifying tensions that frequently leave him with a sense of disgust with himself and with sex.

It would seem, then, that the struggle for sexual control is one that a maturing adult must face consciously, with the full realization that sacrifice of some normal pleasure is involved if the satisfaction of others is to be insured and if sex itself is not to endanger or ruin possibilities of realizing value in normal relationships. Either John will determine the battlefield he will fight on, or the battlefield will be determined for him, and the psychological conditions will decreasingly favor his victory. Either he fights the battle on *his* terms, or he struggles with the terms laid down *for* him by the psychological laws of his nature.

Another related consideration may be noted. Once a dating relationship has progressed to heavy petting, the two human beings who might have enjoyed other areas of interest and activity together find it so easy to enjoy this immediate and intense pleasure that other satisfactions are neglected or stifled. The relation tends to depend for its success on the petting that has now become a demand rather than one variety of value. The tone of the relationship deteriorates, for now the two parties are enjoying only their least common denominator, the body. Accordingly, the dating which was supposed to afford an opportunity to get to know and share varied interests of others becomes an occasion for the old routine. From here the individuals are not so likely to move on to other interests, for the others tend to pivot around sex pleasure or become preliminaries to it. What began as a more complete human

relationship either staggers along in uncertainty and mounting tension or moves into sexual intercourse, to reap perhaps a more intense and satisfying pleasure but to pile up more problems of control in life as a whole. (In this chapter where we are concerned with the causes and effects of petting, we are assuming that premarital sexual intercourse is undesirable and wrong. In the next chapter we shall try to show why this is so.)

Especially if he has not become conscious of these factors, a youth may not realize that sexual expression alone is not what he desires; that he also desires to build confidence in his ability to harmonize with the needs and abilities of his friends and parents, that he also wants their respect, which means much to his self-respect. The moment his sexual urges become a problem to him, he is facing maladjustment at other highly significant points in his life. Among the sorriest persons we have met are those young people who have already lost confidence in their ability to cope with the strength of their sexual desires.[3]

[3] I shall not discuss at any length the problem of masturbation. But it needs to be noted that much masturbation springs from and within the sexual progression. The young person whom petting has aroused may find it a way out of heightened tension to manipulate the sexual organs until tension is released. Much of the literature on this topic has tried, with justification, to reduce the exaggerated fear of physiological consequences which plagued popular thought. The normal human being does not suffer physiological disorder from masturbation. But, unfortunately, the reduction of fear on this point has led to the false impression that masturbation has no other disadvantages. Yet innocent masturbation not only may lead to an increased desire for sexual intercourse, but it may also fix or condition the tempo and mode of response of the person who uses this method of relief. Lewd imaginative fantasies and alcohol may have to be used to induce the final consummation of the act. If the masturbator is frustrated in other areas of life, he is likely to escape to the pleasures received from masturbating to make up for his disappointment. Masturbation may produce as many problems as it solves, both in the present life of the individual and, probably, for the future.

The price they pay for short-lived pleasures is a costly one, and it is evidenced not only in highly intricate rationalization, but in a loss of zest for normal living. For they have already known what it means to be pushed around by their sexual desires. They sought to be emancipated, but they now feel enslaved. Frequently for the absolutistic adolescent this sense of enslavement has far-reaching consequences. Gone are his dreams and high expectations of himself.

The situation is all the sadder when one realizes that the sexual intercourse, into which young people are frequently hurled by the unexpected strength of the urge that petting has now fully aroused, is more likely to be orgiastic and crude than satisfying. To feel "secondhand" on account of that experience is frequently to produce a sentiment of disgust in connection with sex which may remain throughout life. From this time on sex may give pleasure; indeed it may be a necessary part of life. But one so wishes it did not have to be!

Much more could be said, of course, about the significance of petting in human life. *Always* the significance will depend upon the total pattern of the individual personality and character. We have been more concerned to suggest considerations that are basic rather than exhaustive in answer to the question: Is anything wrong with petting? Even at this stage in the analysis we realize that an answer in black or white is hazardous. Every person has a total pattern of life to consider as he tries to work out a policy for his life. Our purpose has been to clarify some of the causes and some of the consequences that need careful weighing. Petting is an easy, and always a tempting, mode of adjustment. But the easy way out may also be the dis-

astrous way to greater conflict, uncertainty, loss of self-confidence, and inner poise. The problem is not simply one of inhibition or expression; it is one of conscious control in the light of all the demands that life is to make upon one.

No Petting at All?

Once this general perspective with regard to sex and petting has been established, we are still left with a serious specific question for any young man or woman, and one which any person may well raise in the light of what has been said in this chapter. We have at once emphasized the interrelation of sexual adjustment with other important phases of life, and the deceptiveness of the sexual progression. It may then be asked: Recognizing the fact of the sexual progression, is the conclusion to be drawn that the adolescent is better off if he or she does not pet at all?

Our answer is: not necessarily. We are aware that for the normal adolescent petting is a source not only of sexual, aesthetic, and social satisfaction but also, possibly, of needed insight into himself. To try to set up arbitrary bars here simply because one fears habituation and the sexual progression is to overlook the values that may be realized in and through petting (see pages 41 through 43). Our first concern has been to sensitize awareness of the fact that petting can so easily bring diminishing satisfaction and increasing difficulty. But the problem is not merely to keep sex from hurting human beings; we must see petting also as a possible means for enriching life in adolescence and later. John and Mary are growing and one of their central problems is to develop emotional stability, to recognize and train their emotions to fulfill

rather than endanger their futures. But they will not be moving toward the goal just because they never pet (though they will not necessarily endanger their adjustment by complete abstinence). To regard kissing and caressing as if these were direct routes to perdition is no more intelligent than to regard them as the supreme joys of adolescent life.

The sexual progression is real and its dangers cannot be side-stepped. But it is not a psychological escalator upon which a person steps and then is taken inevitably to the end of the ascent. The fact is that each step is such that the next follows easily, and temptingly, but not inevitably. The individual is faced with a new problem, but he does not have to succumb. Each individual will have to face this problem of self-discipline consciously, in the light of a whole plan of life and outlook toward others. No human being can gain maturity without learning how to choose values so that they do not yield consequences worse than the good received. Obviously, it is wise to allow a safe margin, but no one can tell another absolutely where that margin begins for him; and the honest person will realize that he can never be too sure of himself. The minimum goal is control and a margin of safety in one's own life with due regard to the same problem in the life of another.

We would suggest an even more important principle by which petting activity (or nonactivity) should be controlled. I can think of many situations in which John and Mary, drawn together by normal human affection and human appreciation, find themselves wanting to express that feeling by kissing (and other forms of endearment or caressing). There is no desire here simply to use another's

body as a means for self-gratification. There is simply what MacMurray[4] has called "emotional sincerity"; there is a bodily expression of friendly mutuality and sympathy, a symbolic extension of the fellowship enjoyed in other activities. There is no desire simply to manipulate another without any concern for his or her welfare, and the dominant thought is not for self at the expense of another. Because there is appreciation and good will, because there is joy in common devotion, there is no desire to lead another on simply because one is himself experiencing pleasure.

In other words, the sooner a human being treats a member of the opposite sex not merely as a male or female, but as a person, the sooner he has stepped into another kind of progression which induces respect and self-control for the sake of human fellowship and not sexual satisfaction alone. John and Mary will never respect themselves if they cannot see that others enjoy and trust them as persons. They will encourage such appreciation and respect only as they treat their boy friends and girl friends not as means to their own satisfaction only, but as persons worth working for and with. Let John feel that the whole circle of persons who care and will care about Mary can honestly thank him for the kind of relationship he is enjoying with her, and he will have no lasting regret that he did not make pleasure an end in itself. If he can learn now how to be a real friend to another with and without sex, he will have learned to live in a way that brings increasing returns as he moves into courtship and marriage. And the same, of course, holds for Mary.

The problem that John and Mary face, then, with re-

[4] John MacMurray, *Reason and Emotion*, p. 132.

gard to sex is part of a larger adjustment to every human situation. John can learn to use his attractive personality, athletic physique, sense of humor, and strong mind selfishly to get what he wants now without incurring the immediate disapproval of his acquaintances and friends. Mary can win her way among her acquaintances by using their weaknesses to strengthen her hold on them for her own purposes. Others may even envy them their ability to manipulate people and get away with it. But their friends will learn soon enough that they live for themselves alone and are unwilling to accept responsibility for what happens to others. They have gained attention but have not been *worthy* of attention.

Let John, therefore, ask himself: When I face a task I don't like, do I see to it that Jim does it for me without getting the credit? Do I use his friendship to get help for me on many things I want to get done without putting myself out for his needs? And let Mary ask herself: Do I find myself charming my way into the lives of others who like me without taking responsibility for what happens when their interests are at stake? Do others like me because they can depend upon my sincerity and good will? Am I allowing others to depend on me because I like to feel important, when I know I could help them to grow more independent without losing my respect and affection? Do I like them more than my selfish power over them?

Questions like these involve far-reaching attitudes that affect every social relationship, be it with girl or boy, man or woman. *The attitude toward sex is usually part of this larger whole.* Thus, let John and Mary ask: Is my attitude toward sex weakening my ability to grow in other respects

or destroying the confidence and security that others need to feel about me? Do I substitute sex appeal for brain appeal and generosity? When I pet do I find that I am in part making it harder for my partner to maintain control and thus endanger ideals he or she has? More specifically, is our relationship as a whole one that is being held together by our sex enjoyment, or could we go on enjoying each other almost as much if we weren't male and female? No one else can give as good an answer to these questions as John and Mary can though their own answers will not always come clearly. But we need not worry about persons who are willing to forego immediate satisfaction except as they protect and develop their friendly feeling for others. Such persons are already learning to love others. They are willing to give up the self-which-possesses for the self-which-is self-possessed.

The Limitations of the Kinsey Report on Petting

In view of what has been said in this chapter about the sexual progression, it may be well to comment on some of the statements in the Kinsey Report about petting and its effects.

There is no longer any doubt about the vitality of the sexual urge in the growing boy. According to Kinsey and his associates, the peak of sexual performance is reached not in the twenties or thirties but in the sixteenth and seventeenth years. All the more, then, does the total adjustment of the adolescent need to be emphasized if control is to be achieved.

Kinsey corroborates the impression that for the younger generation petting is a more frequent sexual outlet than it was for their fathers. Even more interesting is the find-

ing that petting to sexual climax (apart from intercourse) is used frequently by young men in the upper social and educational circles (cf. pp. 245, 249, 543). As Kinsey remarks, these "upper level" young people use petting as a means of releasing sexual tension in order to avoid sexual intercourse itself. Members of the less privileged social groups find their main outlet in premarital sexual intercourse. In terms of percentage, prior to marriage 28 per cent of all males pet to climax, but among males in the upper educational level 58 per cent pet until orgasm occurs.

One wishes that one knew whether or not the boys who do relieve sexual tension by premarital intercourse have rapidly run through the sexual progression and found that even petting to climax was inadequate. No doubt the attitudes formed by these boys about the place of sex in life, about their relations to girls, reflect the *level* of the satisfaction they expect from life. It would, however, be interesting to know how many of the boys (and girls) were led to sexual intercourse because they did not realize the fact of the progression—that the expression of sex does not make it easier to maintain self-control.

Nor does the Kinsey study help us on a most important problem, especially from the point of view of this chapter. More important than the *quantity* of petting and sexual intercourse is the *quality* of human experience enjoyed by the participants. Kinsey, absorbed in his quantitative analysis, does not investigate the problems that these individuals face in their total adjustment both to sex and to others. When Kinsey says, what is no doubt true, that there is much individual variation in the physical effects of petting on the adolescent, it is important to underscore

the word *physical,* for Kinsey is not concerned with other effects and frequently speaks as if none other were really important. The Kinsey study will do more harm than good unless we realize that the attitude toward one's own sexual life, toward one's self, is far more important than the occurrence and nonoccurrence of sexual activity.

Kinsey's neglect of qualitative aspects of sexual experience becomes more serious as he generalizes about the relation of petting experience to marital adjustment. Sexual adjustment is, of course, only one problem in married living. Yet its importance is not to be minimized. Indeed, when there is sexual maladjustment, other disturbances and problems may result unless patience, skill, and love bless the marriage. Kinsey is probably not wrong when he says that in upper-level marriages the sexual factors most often causing difficulty are lack of skill in approach on the part of the husband as well as inadequate freedom of response on the part of his wife. But surely Kinsey oversimplifies when, referring to unpublished data, he says: "There is, then, considerable evidence that premarital petting experience contributes definitely to the effectiveness of the sexual relations after marriage" (p. 546). He goes on to comment that many who have not engaged in premarital experience do make satisfactory adjustments later. What is not clear in passages like these is the meaning of effective marital adjustment. Kinsey never tells us. Until we are clear about the most desirable and valuable relation of sex to marriage, there is no way of judging the good or bad effects of premarital intercourse (see next chapter). But, staying within the purpose of this chapter, we would still underscore the fact that these data about petting and premarital intercourse leave us in the

dark about the effect on the quality of life of the particular individuals involved.

Does not human wisdom as well as established psychological conclusions support the contention that the attitude toward sexual life and its place in life as a whole is more important than the practice of, or abstinence from, petting? A person's attitude toward his competence or incompetence, along with all the other relevant attitudes, is probably more significant for the *quality* of the sexual adjustment and married life as a whole. But is it unreasonable, in the light of human experience, to conclude that the youth who controls his sexual expression for wholesome reasons stands a better chance of realizing the most that sex can offer his life as a whole, including marriage, than the person who does not? There is no simple one-way relation between the biology of premarital petting and intercourse and either the biological or the psychological quality of the experience of sexual union. In the remaining chapters our thesis will be clearer, but here we cannot stress enough the distortion that takes place if, in evaluating the sexual life, we overlook its relation to the total problem of individual and social living.

2

The Place of Sexual Intercourse in Human Experience

In all enjoyment there is a choice between enjoying the other and enjoying yourself through the instrumentality of the other. The first is the enjoyment of love, the second is the enjoyment of lust. When people enjoy themselves through each other that is merely mutual lust. They do not meet as persons at all; their reality is lost. They meet as ghosts of themselves and their pleasure is ghostly pleasure that cannot begin to satisfy a human soul, and which only vitiates its capacity for reality.

—JOHN MACMURRAY, *Reason and Emotion*

If, on the other hand, they leave philosophy and lead the lower life of ambition, then probably, after wine or in some careless hour . . . they accomplish that desire of their hearts which to the many is bliss; and this having once enjoyed they continue to enjoy, yet rarely because they have not approval of the whole soul.

—PLATO, *Phaedrus*

The Progression of Love

I HAVE been suggesting that the struggle that a person confronts with regard to the control of petting is part of a larger struggle that faces him as a human being living with other human beings. He must decide whether he will satisfy his desires simply because he wants to, or whether

he will satisfy them only if their satisfaction promises continued fulfillment both for himself and for others. He must decide whether he will suit himself at the expense of others, or whether he will regulate his own life so that others may find in him not a parasitic burden, but a co-operative member in the search for growing happiness.

When, as he matures, the adolescent experiences the strength of a human urge which seems at times all-powerful, his struggle may become unusually acute. This urge, sex lust, can seduce him into regarding other persons, especially members of the opposite sex, as mere instruments for his own satisfaction; it can become an end in itself which forces incomplete satisfaction for other needs. He may then acquire a pattern of ideas, emotions, and habits which gains such a hold on his life that he stands in constant danger of being a nuisance to others and of becoming a slave of immediate pleasures. If a person who finds himself losing self-control and the respect of others could automatically lose his desire to be trusted and enjoyed and could stifle his yearning to love and be loved, he might be spared an even more acute conflict than that produced by the sexual progression.

For these other urges, these desires to adjust one's abilities to the needs of others, to feel the glow of their good will, are demands that in fact outreach the cries for sex satisfaction. These yearnings for fellowship with respected persons characterize human beings in their calm moments of strength and vision. They are part of the deep desire to be needed, to give oneself for what one considers worthwhile. This deep-rooted yearning is easy to overlook and neglect, for it does not always make itself felt as sharply as do such specific, temporary desires as sex lust. But that

it stands in the background of human striving is as much a fact about human existence as is the fact of sexual desire.

John and Mary have to decide what kind of love, what kind of human relationships, they want to realize. It is easy to love others "calculatingly," making sure not to hurt them so much that they will retaliate. It is not hard to be prudent, mind one's own business, without getting involved in the problems and difficulties others suffer. They may decide that playing it safe does not hurt others anyway. But, alas, playing it safe does not force John and Mary to develop self-control and the skills and abilities needed to help others. It does not encourage them to think and feel for others. In honest moments they will not be happy in the thought that they do not deserve the love and respect of others.

Accordingly, if John and Mary, as we have seen, find themselves working out their relations to members of the other sex in terms of ways in which others may be "used," they will find increasing conflict in their lives. The *progression of sex on this level* promises self-enslavement and parasitic social relationships. On the other hand, the *progression of love* promises outgrowth and encouragement of the best in them and others.

Within the progression of love they will think of satisfaction not in terms of "What shall I get out of it?" but "What shall we—and everyone else—get out of it?" They may not always meet with gratitude, but they will not meet with indifference and distrust. They will find that *whole*-some joy that comes when one feels that no one need distrust, no one need fear, one's own motives and plans. The progression of love is not an easy ascent, but each step in feeling that one's own happiness is heightened when

others are happy is a step in self-mastery and creative social living.

We shall seek to understand more clearly the problems set up by the conflict between the progression of sex and the progression of love. We shall also examine more carefully the assumption made in the last chapter that extramarital sexual intercourse is undesirable, by elaborating the relation between lust, love, and life.

The Human Experience of Sex

When a person decides that he is going to get all he can out of sex *as sex,* he is driven into an almost endless progression: he must find a new fancy, a new variety of sexual experience, real or imaginary, for he soon tires of the last mode of sexual exploration. Having made sex an end in itself, as a miser makes money an end in itself, or as a glutton makes food an end in itself, there is nothing more to do but seek some more thrilling or novel sexual experience. Many sexual perverts are products of this chase for new forms of pleasure. They teach us that sexual expression for its own sake brings diminishing returns. I am not, of course, trying to say that every incontinent person becomes a sex pervert, but he invites trouble for himself and others when he tries to find in sex what sex as such cannot give him. Sex experience for its own sake, and certainly when the other person is simply "used," hardens the arteries of tender feeling. Though sexual perversion is by no means a necessary result, the loss of tenderness and sympathy, let alone self-confidence, is a tremendous price to pay for sex pleasure.

On the other hand, sex is an increasing source of personal enrichment when dedicated to objectives other than

mere self-satisfaction. The fact of human experience seems to be that persons enjoy deeper, more lasting, and more profound satisfaction when the normal experience of sex lust is not primarily an end in itself but a symbolic expression of other values. This, after all, is true not only about sex but about other desires also. We enjoy eating at a banquet in honor of a friend more than eating in solitude. Before elaborating this theme, several remarks must be made about a counter-theme that has pervaded, sometimes quite subtly, much thinking about the functioning of sex in human life.

There is a tendency to think of sex in human experience as a continuation of the sex function in animals. Man's life, including sex, is more complicated but not essentially different from that of the higher animals. The prevalence of this view has sometimes led us to suppose that sex education is hardly necessary since at the right time the biological organism will react effectively and appropriately as it does among animals. Thinking of man as a complicated animal, we falsely reasoned that his sex behavior is as mechanical and automatic with him as it is with animals. Indeed, some of us added, to expect him to control himself sexually is like expecting an animal in heat to reject sexual advances. The best we can do, according to this view, is to realize that man is a higher animal and teach him enough of the physiology of sex to avoid disease.

This line of reasoning neglects the *human* significance of sex. Sex in the human is so interwoven with his total psychological being that, once allowance is made for some physiological similarities, the contrasts are more illuminating than the likenesses. To compare the sounds an animal makes with the poetry of word symbols gives

some notion of the range of differences possible. The biological transaction of sexual intercourse in animals has at its best nowhere near the possible meaning that a similar biological transaction can have in human experience. Sex education has failed to make enough of the function of sex as human experience. In consequence we have talked as if the biology of sex measures its importance as a human function.

Consequently the argument against intercourse has emphasized the physical effects of sexual promiscuity, the danger of sexual diseases and of pregnancy. These must not be minimized, but they have played such a large part in the so-called "case for chastity" that both young and old have wondered, with justification, what possible case can be made against promiscuity once knowledge of the methods of disease prevention and contraceptives has been increased and disseminated. The concern of the military during World War II did not go beyond educating young men and women for physical efficiency. The general impression was left that sin is not in sexual intercourse but in the infection that may result from carelessness. We seemed to be bankrupt of really adequate reasons why human beings should abstain from promiscuity when they are confident that impregnation or venereal diseases can be prevented.

The situation will not be greatly changed until we become more fully aware of the conditions in human experience under which sexual intercourse makes its deepest contributions. Here we are clearly in the area of the interpretation of the value of sex as part of the meaning of life. If we cannot interpret the higher values of sex as clearly as we have explained physiological, and even psy-

chological, details, we shall go on "expressing" sex and "avoiding frustration" when we might be finding, through sex experience, a creative human joy.

The Human Challenge in Love

The assumption at this stage of the argument is that love, marriage, and the home are among the supreme values of human existence; that the human beings who cannot enjoy the blessings that love, marriage, and the home bestow are relatively poverty-stricken. We shall try to show that the experience of sex may bless or endanger love, that it may bless or be a constant source of friction in marriage, that it may be a solid foundation for co-operative family life or a source of frustrating disharmony.

As already suggested, there is a "love progression" in human life. This progression is affected by the sexual progression, but it has its own laws. The love progression protects the satisfactions of sex, but sex, unless mastered, will endanger the progression of love and enslave the person. The individual in love invests his energies and abilities in joyous concern for the security and growth of another. He finds fulfillment of his own life in consecration to the needs and development of his beloved. As his love grows, his self-discipline increases with a view to insuring the happiness of his sweetheart. He rethinks and replans the goals of his life so that she may find opportunity and realization within them. "To love a person productively implies to care, to feel responsible for his life, not only for his physical existence, but for the growth and development of all his human powers."[1]

[1] Fromm, Eric. *Man for Himself.* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart) $3.50.

Loving, therefore, is a kind of growing. Love inspires one to live with at least one other person in mind. The circle of self-enjoyment grows into an ellipse in which the two poles are included. But, as Plato long ago reminded us, love is a suffering yearning for what one does not possess completely. The individual must refocus his mind and body, re-form his ideas and dreams, so that the good he wants for himself and for his sweetheart may be realized. Love means growth; it means work; it means moral progress. Thus *love, inclusive of sex, needs marriage to protect and nourish its values. And marriage, to be a most fruitful and inclusive experience which protects and nourishes the values of both love and sex, must be put to work in building a family and a society.* This is the inner progression of love.

It is evident that there will be many obstacles on the way to realizing personality and character built around love. The deception in the progression of love is just the opposite of that in the sexual progression. For now the individual will be tempted to stop short of more complete fulfillment. It will be easy to think that a sexual experience enjoyed by two persons will remain an adequate source of joy, that the pleasure of sex and love without marriage will endure, that marriage without commitment to objectives greater than the union of two married lovers will maintain a challenging equilibrium. For there is no doubt that sex lust usually brings pleasure sufficiently gratifying to seem entirely satisfactory, especially to those who do not know the quality of sex love. So also with this next step in the progression of love: sex love without marriage can bring so much satisfaction, at least for a time, that two persons may be tempted to forego the more

complete satisfaction of married love. Then there are some who, having reached a high level of married love, may be tempted to forfeit the more creative experience that children and a home can bring.

Let the sexual act be the expression of the conscious desire and decision to become parents, and that act reaches its zenith in human feeling, inspiration, and fulfillment. It is almost foolish to try to make this experience clear to those who have not known it. Words that receive their content from other levels of sex experience are quite inadequate for this. Let two persons extend their love for each other into the tender and responsible decision to have and care for children, and they will find the meaning of the sexual experience immeasurably enriched.

Sex, love, marriage, family, and social responsibility are human ventures all along the line. The question is: Which venture brings completeness, invites to growth in character and personality, enables the individual to feel that he has accepted the role that his abilities allow in the achievement of a dependable social order? It is our thesis that love, including sex love, is the more radiant and satisfying when it becomes a means of communicating one's concern for the wider range of values that purposeful living together makes possible. Sex without love, love without marriage, and marriage without creative commitments to children (or the equivalent) are in constant danger of vanishing away. Persons disregard the laws of growth and development in human nature only to find that they have forfeited their heritage.

Love, at its best, is the supreme victory over parasitism and egoism. It is a unique fruition of human experience, so unique and so different from anything in the physical

and biological world, that it stands as the richest product of human effort. It is not, however, a fruit which just comes with maturation. It will be no greater than the person in love; it will reflect and challenge the intelligence, emotion, and discipline dedicated to its development.

The Impetus of Love

A human being without love exists on a subhuman level. He may try to avoid responsibilities and cares while enjoying lesser satisfactions. But his nature is such that, once he has known what it means to be in love, life without love is a clanging cymbal. For to love is to change the directions of life; it is to center one's own satisfaction in the creative growth of another. It binds two persons into a unique relation in which they live for and with each other. It makes the difference between existing and living. Note how the lover says to his beloved that he had been only existing without her, and he never wants to go back to that!

Loving is a kind of wager with existence; it is a new level of existence that calls for the reorganization of one's being around a more inclusive objective—the life of the partner. It is no great wonder that to the person to whom love is new, life becomes "out of this world." It is a new adventure that involves new responsibilities. To find that another really cares without having to, that one's life is important and a source of enrichment to another, is reason enough for the intoxicating superlatives that fill the diaries of lovers. "I can't believe it. I thought nobody would ever find me important to happiness. I wonder if I can really make her happy. She deserves so much! I must

never let her down, never give her one bad moment! Oh, it's so wonderful to be with her! Everything about her, from that delicate wave in her hair to the way she walks, makes me feel so proud and so humble." And so it goes on.

Love begins in that early attraction, develops as each finds more encouragement for his own values, more challenge in another's interests and needs and objectives. There are many things to do, to plan, to talk about and dream about, and they are much more interesting because two persons can enjoy them and find themselves interlocked by them. There is a surge of emotional energy—sometimes quiet, sometimes turbulent, always demanding—constantly seeking a new way, a more intimate and complete means of expressing itself. One cannot go on feeling this way day after day, can one? It seems more than one can bear—more than both lovers can bear—to be so close to each other spiritually, without expressing their unity physically. They hold hands tightly, they kiss meaningfully, they embrace almost as one, and feel a closer, a more symbolic psychological and spiritual unity. "How can it be wrong for two human beings who admire and respect each other as we do, who are committed to each other as we are, to follow what every pulse of mind and body urges?"

What two persons in love have not found themselves pondering this question? It is easy for one not in this situation to minimize its power until he is brought face to face with it as was the day that Judith and Harry came to see me. Both juniors in college, interested in sports, debating, "Y" work, and social questions, they had been going together for about a year. These were not just two wild-eyed "kids" whose hands unconsciously and nat-

urally found each other. They looked tense and tired; they had come to the end of their emotional and philosophical rope. Had they been irresponsible young people, they would not have been there with the question Harry was ready to pose.

"Why shouldn't we express our love for each other, and stop bottling up our feelings? We don't want to live without each other, but we can't be married for at least two years. We've been told that sexual intercourse is not justified, and we both know that our parents would be bitterly disappointed if they knew that these thoughts even entered our heads. But here we are, feeling like society's scapegoats. This demand of our parents and of society is going to break up, if we let it, one of the most beautiful experiences in our lives. We want each other; we want to stop fighting each other's feelings. We know about contraceptives, and we know where we can get adequate medical advice in these matters. If a baby should come, we would make the adjustment and we'd love it. I can always quit school and get a job if it comes to that. We care for each other so much that we can take any eventuality in our stride, but we know we can't go on this way; we'll go stale! Maybe we're rationalizing, but isn't society rationalizing? Suppose there is a risk. Can you give a real reason for postponing the full expression of our love?"

Here, then, are two young people who stand at a peak of experience. For them life now means a certain quality of togetherness that heightens the value of their existence. If they live by the impetus of their dominant psychobiological impulses alone, they will go into an experience that in itself will transcend past peaks. It does no good to minimize that fact for, after all, it will be for them (two years

earlier) the same symbol of spiritual unity that it would be after marriage. What can be said, indeed, that will meet them on their own grounds and be rationally satisfying?

The attitude of Judith and Harry weakens the criticism that appeals to the fear of pregnancy, to society's demand that children should be supported, and to other possible social consequences of premarital intercourse. If there is a case that will stand against sexual intercourse at their level of experience, it must spring from considerations as deep as is this spiritual demand for the fruition of sex love, and not merely sex lust. This is the challenge in Harry's and Judith's question. Our generation must give an answer to it. Let us make their case even stronger and assume that foolproof contraceptives are available. What makes it wrong for human beings to enjoy sexual intercourse when they love each other? Why intimate that love expressed in sexual intercourse without marriage is endangered while love expressed in sexual intercourse in marriage is not endangered?

The Place of Marriage in a Person's Life

It seems to me that no reasonable answer is possible without an understanding of the function of human marriage in psychological and ethical terms. Too many Judiths and Harrys, as well as their elders, conceive of marriage as an institution that justifies sexual intercourse and protects the children born thereby. For many young people the reason for sexual abstinence, especially if two persons love each other, would vanish if perfect contraception were assured. Let us turn our attention first to the broader and deeper roots of monogamous marriage. Once

we reflect upon these, we can better appraise the place of sexual intercourse in life.[2]

Monogamous marriage is a testimony to the reasonable faith that two human beings can improve the quality of their lives to a degree not otherwise possible. Every person develops aims for his life. He may not be conscious of his aims or values, but for him they make life worthwhile. Frequently he wants more than he is able to realize through his abilities in the situations confronting him. It is not easy to have dreams and then become aware of one's inability to work them out because of obstacles in oneself and in the environment. It is easy to lose faith in oneself, and in life itself, especially when growing up means a sharper awareness of good and evil, of hypocrisy in unexpected places, of human failures in kindness and forgiveness. Doubt about the value of ideals allows the maturing person to be less censorious of his own weakness. And yet he would like to believe that life holds promise, that he is not alone in the struggle for meaning. For him to find another engaged in the same struggle is to find a partner whose efforts throw light on his own.

[2] The conception of marriage that will be suggested here might be related to the many conceptions of the function of marriage explored by the anthropologist and sociologist. But our concern is to suggest an ethical norm for marriage that takes into adequate account, we hope, the forces present in the social matrix of Western civilization. While forms of marriage other than the monogamous may serve important social functions in their particular social context, they hardly provide the conditions in which some of the finest values of life are protected. Rather than assert that other forms of marriage are just as good as monogamy, we would hold that monogamy best satisfies the needs of human beings, and that the sooner other societies can develop to the stage where monogamy is possible, the better it will be for all mankind. We cannot here do more than suggest the background of a conviction on a very involved problem, but those for whom we are writing are at least socially committed to monogamous marriage.

The sympathy and encouragement of the other dissolve the loneliness of spirit that roots in the fear that one's ideals may perhaps be mere dreams.

Can it be, indeed, that the inspiration and revival human beings find in falling in love springs from the realization that life will not have to be a kind of soliloquy at the deeper value centers in experience? To find another who is stirred by the same visions, who does not talk what is "ultimate nonsense" all the time, whose beliefs challengingly express one's ideals, and whose life is at least a partial incarnation of what we consider worth-while—this is to find one's life befriended and one's values at home right here and now in this person who walks, talks, smiles, and reflects them. There are, no doubt, problems with which each soul may simply have to walk alone or with God. But even at these moments to feel that another would, if possible, share that problem, is to feel more at home and confident in life. Others may help and feel close to one in many ways, but this sweetheart is willing to live through to the end.

If this suggests to some reader that the experience of being in love is analogous to vital religious experience, the comparison is aptly drawn. As we see it, the faith that there is Another who cares, cares in a degree and manner that no human being can adequately understand, is psychologically continuous with the yearning that one's deepest values find at least another sponsor in the world. Whether the belief in such a Personal Source of Values be true or untrue, for those who sincerely believe that God cares about their growth, there usually comes that peace *in* mind, that motivation of purpose, which keeps life steadfast in the pursuit of greater good. Many who do

not find this dimension of spiritual incentive do discover in their love for another, and in another's love for them, a similar anchoring of their ideals and zest for their development.[3]

To state these things is to feel a certain audacity in the human venture in monogamy. For one suddenly realizes how preposterous seems the draft being made upon a human relation. Yet none of us can deny the existence of this yearning not to walk alone with one's values, to respect and serve the values of another, to find solace and inspiration in the course of one's weariness, a companion for one's joys, and a partner in one's crucial ideals. Nor can we deny that the person in love, when his love is more than lust, feels something akin to this poor description. When he marries he dedicates these feelings publicly and openly, vowing that he will continue to work with his beloved for the things that matter most as they understand them.

Unmarried persons are free from the awesome problem of creatively unifying two lives. They do not face the challenge of harmonizing complicated sets of value themes —the challenge of days, weeks, months, and years of responsibilities and opportunities, of dishes and dusting, of mending and buying, of earning and giving, of sickness and health, of meeting people and making friends, of working with and for others. Nor do they experience an incessant challenge to their resources of good humor and

[3] We have long wondered why many psychologists have not allowed such experiences of the lover to tell them something about human nature in its own terms before they decide to reduce it to a complicated form of infantile or childhood experience. Certainly the spiritual trauma, the struggle for security in one's values, is as significant as, and more observable than, the birth trauma.

intelligence, of courage and good will, of patience and flexibility. The economy of effort that marriage makes possible at one point calls for a maximum of effort at many others, for one shares the other's concerns along with one's own. Even these brief suggestions should indicate that, while marriage takes root in vital yearnings, it also sets up as many problems as it promises to solve. Many of these problems, and others as complex, a human being has to face even without the comradeship of another. But the only thing worse than unhappy singleness is unhappy marriage. For now all burdens are complicated and the failure is more devastating. We are never surprised at the seemingly high rate of divorce, undesirable as it is for all concerned. Monogamous marriage is a high calling, fraught with real values and real dangers. The coming of children increases the sense of significance, the problems, the opportunities for mutual growth, and the burden of possible failure.

Are the values worth the risk? For those who would judge life by a balance sheet of pleasure and pain, the answer might be doubtful. The young lover, of course, has no doubt of the worth-whileness of the venture. He is no longer happy in his singleness, and he feels that existence has little to offer unless he and his dear one are united. But romantic illusions aside, and accepting the assumption that children *might* be reared in a better atmosphere than a family, is the marriage relation between two persons in itself desirable?

The answer may be briefly suggested by the questions: Is there any other relation between human beings (apart from parent and child) that calls for more kindness, sincerity, sensitivity to growth, courage, and patience, and

that can yield so much peace of mind, zest for life, opportunity for sharing, intimacy of human feeling, and gracious generosity? Can any other human relation produce and develop such virtues and values in two persons? We shall need to say much more about the demands that a creative marriage makes upon two persons (Chapter Four). At this point we may affirm that the person who deliberately by-passes marriage is risking the loss of a supreme purpose and an inspiring joy. Within marriage there grows that love which is the goal of all other loves between human beings, the responsible sharing of the human adventure in purposeful living. Nor must we overlook the adventure in maturing of spirit that the rearing of children makes possible! Were not great values and great losses at stake, there would be little point in trying to answer the difficult question: Why should not two persons in sex love with each other, and who intend to marry, have sexual intercourse?

The Significance of Sexual Intercourse in Married Life

In trying to give Harry and Judith a reasonable answer, we must assume that the basic motive behind their desire for premarital sexual intercourse is love. Judith and Harry are not in lust with each other, but in love with each other. The main motive is not exploitation, not the pleasure of satisfying sexual desire as such, but the desire to express in a physical way the unity that they feel spiritually. The sexual act would here symbolize the yearning of each person to unite himself more completely with the beloved; it becomes one of the best ways of saying, "I love you."

It is because we believe that this motive is psychologically and ethically sound that we wish to elaborate further what seems to be the profoundest meaning of the sexual act, before trying to show that sexual intercourse before marriage endangers that meaning. We cannot take the argument on its own ground without evaluating the place of sex in the marriage of lovers.

The act of sexual intercourse between a man and a woman gives pleasure at the purely biological level. As the expression of feelings that involve their whole psychophysical being, especially when they are stirred to a high emotional pitch, it is highly satisfying. The psychological satisfaction is deepest when the couple experience orgasm together, when in these brief rhythmic moments of mutual physiological response, both persons reach the climax of their emotional expression at the same time. If human beings were simply physiological organisms, and if this act could be dissociated from other human needs, the physiological and psychological pleasure and satisfaction involved in it would justify it as an end in itself. *But because human beings are more than physiological reactions, because these responses mean more than they themselves as actions in intercourse are, sexual intercourse can seldom, if ever, be an isolated experience of satisfaction.* This physiological transaction can become a source either of much mental discontent, moral guilt, and aesthetic disgust, or of profound mental peace, moral satisfaction, and aesthetic delight, not to mention the possibilities of religious value.

Here, for human beings, is the crux of the sexual problem in life. Sex is a means of communicating a variety of meanings; its objectifies or symbolizes a variety of feel-

ings and ideas that human beings have about themselves and others. It can mean simply, "I'm sexually hungry and I want satisfaction through you." It can mean, "I love you and I want to be identified as far as possible with you." Or it can mean, "We love each other. Life means so much to us that we want children to share its creative joy and values." There are other meanings, of course—as many meanings as the mates find possible in and through each other. These three stages need not exclude each other though the first may endanger the next two. But for two persons who love each other, and therefore find life's meaning heightened and focused in that love, there can hardly be conceived a more expressive symbol of the yearning for unity than a mutual, harmonious orgasm. Two persons find their deepest satisfaction not in mere self-satisfaction, but in making it possible for the loved one to express his feelings in and through his own contribution to a harmonious act.

The testimony of married persons who have found it possible so to discipline their reaction as to find mutuality in orgasm gives clear corroboration at this point. To feel that one's partner encourages and enjoys one's own activity and responses, to feel that one can meet the needs of the person one loves even as one expresses the intensity and meaning of one's own desires, is, indeed, a human experience worth cherishing. We cannot emphasize enough the qualitative enjoyment and meaning of this experience. What two lovers experience, especially in simultaneous orgasm, is not so much physiological simultaneity but the meanings that they, as two human beings dedicated to each other, so want to express. No wonder lovers who have experienced exhaustion in the psychological and

physical release of their tension can continue to embrace each other in the afterglow of mental peace, physiological relaxation, and grateful appreciation. How clearly this act can symbolize what the marriage of two loving persons means, the dedication of one's being to the growing happiness of another.

This is an experience that does work creatively in the lives of two persons, for it renews confidence and infuses new meaning. The amazing fact about it is that it can, on the same physiological base, go on being a source of renewal. Youth, middle age, and maturity find different levels of meaning and renewal thereby. This would hardly be so were it not that through sexual intercourse the lovers who are now parents (or the lovers who are now the center of responsibilities and joys in family and civic life, or the lovers who are now older physically but more mature as persons) go on using it to communicate meanings that never find adequate expression in words.

If what I have been saying is true, it is clear that both the harmony of sex experience and the expressive significance of that unity are such sources of strength and enjoyment in married life that they deserve the needed preparation and protection. Violins cannot create music if they are not tuned, or if the violinist cannot control his feelings, thoughts, and muscles to suit his meaning. If there is no "music" in the violinist, even the greatest skill in playing will not produce "music with a soul." To carry this figure further, violinists cannot create music when they are not playing the same score or when they have not been able to synchronize their playing in accordance with their respective parts in the musical whole. Harmony, physiological and spiritual, requires more than

good will; it requires careful discriminating thought, sensitive and sincere feeling, and self-discipline that subordinates tensions for the sake of the whole.

It may seem that we are making too much of the unity of intercourse, but if that be an error it is one that needs underscoring since we are purposely insisting upon the quality of the experience. Sexual intercourse has its greatest value when the minds and actions of two persons communicate their meanings. From this viewpoint, it is unfortunate that so many persons, in and out of marriage, are forfeiting such a high quality of experience, frequently without realizing that they are doing so. They are expressing lust, decreasing sexual tension, experiencing different depths of pleasure. But they are usually sacrificing, or jeopardizing, richer values otherwise open to them.

Let us pause here and attempt to avoid misunderstanding.

We are not saying that young men and women, for whom sex has been simply a pleasurable outlet, or who have been unable, for differing reasons, to live controlled sexual lives, are inevitably barred from mutuality in orgasm (or that those who have remained virginal will by that very fact have guaranteed mutuality). But other things being equal, a personal history of relative promiscuity and a loss of self-confidence and adequate self-control are not conducive to achievement of mutuality. While it is important to realize that many other psychological factors will enter into the achievement of mutual orgasm at any one point in married life, we fly in the face of all we know about psychological habits and associations if we allow ourselves to think that a relatively undisciplined past, with all its associations and psychological effects

upon the individual, will not become an obstacle—not necessarily insuperable to be sure—to mutuality.

To continue, part of our central thesis is that human beings have been and are, in fact, losing much of the joy possible in sex and love because they are thinking too much of sex expression and not enough about expressing values through sex and in love. We cannot be said to be educating persons with regard to sex until we are as much concerned about the objectives of complete sexual experience as we have been about removing inhibitions. Sex expression is not self-expression. And self-expression is not necessarily the expression of love. We have taken too little cognizance of the probable fact that multitudes of men and women are disappointed with their sexual experience; it becomes, like ordinary eating, a means of regularly satisfying an otherwise discomforting need. The less persons understand about the meaning that sex can have in their lives, the more likely are they to find the most direct means of expression.[4] The very fact that the physical pleasure of releasing tension is theirs blinds them to higher values that would both intensify the physiological pleasure and also lead to more complete fulfillment of their total being.

From this point of view of quality in sex experience, there is very little value in Kinsey's data with regard to the relation of premarital intercourse and sexual effectiveness in marriage. He says:

> It is sometimes asserted that all persons who have premarital intercourse subsequently regret the experience,

[4] This statement finds support in Kinsey's statistics with regard to the differences both in freedom of sex expression and mode of sex expression in persons with little school education—and, one assumes, what that means to the development of human understanding.

> and that such regrets may constitute a major cloud on their lives. There are a few males whose histories seem to indicate that they have so reacted to their premarital experience, but a high proportion of the thousands of experienced males whom we have questioned on this point indicated that they did not regret having had such an experience, and that the premarital intercourse had not caused any trouble in their subsequent marital adjustments (p. 562).

As Kinsey realizes, even at this level of description one needs accurate data from the wives. But the ambiguous words in his statement are "trouble" and "regret." If "no trouble" means simply that there were no special inhibitions, or feelings of guilt that hindered physiological reaction, or that no serious disunity between the partners was involved, the crux of the problem is not touched. Assuming—what we doubt can be assumed—that "experienced males" would admit that they had been deceived by their desires, what we need to know (and cannot find out probably from men habituated to satisfy desires conveniently) is the effect upon the quality of their marital relation, both sexually and as a whole. Did it make for greater loyalty, for deeper appreciation and respect, both of oneself, one's partner, and the act itself?

When Kinsey continues, "It is notable that most of the males who did regret the experience were individuals who had had very little premarital intercourse, amounting in most cases to not more than one or two experiences" (p. 563), is the conclusion to be drawn that if they had further indulged they would have ceased being disturbed? Or does this also suggest that some persons expected more from themselves and from the sexual experience, and that they realized how little sex as a merely biological or even

sociable experience had to contribute to their lives? Obviously, there are no definite conclusions to be drawn from such data.

But Kinsey goes so far in trying to avoid any generalization condemning premarital experience that he makes "the significance of premarital intercourse" depend "upon the situations under which it is had" (p. 561), upon whether the experience is free from fear or "satisfying." This again begs the real question of the kind of fear and the quality of satisfaction. The whole problem is: Can a person outside of married love find the most that sex can bring to human life? Can experiences in which one's fundamental concern is the satisfaction of one's own desire become the psychological basis for an experience in which concern for another's complete well-being is symbolized in the sexual act? Can ego-centered habituation, in idea, in motive, in emotion, in action, be a help in establishing a relation in which another human being, a home, and children call for self-mastery?

A little reflection, then, will make clear the task before any two married persons. It will be evident that much discipline may be required if mutuality is to be realized at the psychophysiological level. Even assuming that past experience with sex has been without serious conflict, so that both persons are emotionally free and are ready to discover the full meaning of sex in their relations to each other, they cannot be sure that the experience of unity will readily be theirs. The sexual responsiveness of the male and female organism is by no means the same, and every couple has to work out the modes of mutual response suited to their own particular natures.

At this point of physiological unity one cannot dogma-

tize about the prerequisites in terms of past sexual experience. As already suggested, one cannot universalize the statement that habits of response derived from premarital experience will interfere necessarily with present adjustment to one's partner. A person's attitude toward his or her past experience, the effect of it upon his emotional life, the attitude of the mate, the total import of the other values in a marriage are always probably more important than the mere fact of abstinence or nonabstinence. But even from the point of view of physiological unity, are not the probabilities on our side when we say that, other things being normal, the chances of harmonizing responses are much greater when two lovers come together who have a history of self-mastery and confidence with regard to sex? Will not "a past of pleasure" be a threat to the more important psychological, moral, aesthetic, and religious overtones—those which transform physical notes into a human symphony.

We need not here go into the different physical and psychological causes that might well lead to an initial disharmony and to a long struggle to achieve the kind of mental freedom and control necessary for increasing sexual harmony. Suffice it to say that one of the greatest misconceptions that young people bring to marriage is that there will be no sex problem in marriage. The fact is that marriage may create as many sex problems as it solves. Too many honeymoons have found two persons who loved each other not a little disturbed, and sometimes shocked, by inability to enjoy the kind of sexual harmony for which their spirits were prepared. To repeat, then, any couple that looks forward to married life needs to face honestly and resolutely the fact that the finest psychophysical ex-

pression of their love may have to await the patient discipline and understanding for which their particular response patterns call. Fortunately their meaning to each other, the unity they feel, can be expressed in other ways as they work for greater unity in the sexual satisfaction of their love.

One of the strongest reasons for urging that a person come through adolescence feeling that he is in control of sex (and not sex in control of him) should now be clear. For the less he can control his mind and body, the more difficult his readjustment to his beloved may be at the very time he is most anxious to succeed. The more he is conditioned to a certain form of sexual progression, the more habituated he has become to certain modes of response, the greater the variety of thoughts and associations that come crowding into his mind now that he is trying to meet the needs of his life partner, the harder it is to make the new adjustment that has to be made to his loved one. The person whose past experience with sex has been that of the hungry animal, or that of the egotistic philanderer who has thought of his partner essentially as a means to his enjoyment, will not have an easy time meeting a new situation in which his highest nature wants expression for the sake of his beloved. From the point of view of married life as a whole, the person who has learned to think of human beings as "males" or "females" who can be "used" may indeed find and create more trouble than he can imagine.

It would be tragic to underemphasize the importance of such psychological influences. Let two persons bring wandering thoughts, feelings of insecurity and guilt, desires for self-aggrandizement, or any other expectations

foreign to the unique problem of welding two lives together, and the marriage of their spirits will have this much more to overcome.

Reasons for Premarital Sexual Abstinence

Such considerations provide a background for facing the questions posed by Harry and Judith. We must challenge: If the essence of love is to create and preserve the best there is in life for both persons, is premarital sexual experience consistent with love? Does the premarital experience of sex promote or endanger the very values to which these persons as lovers are dedicated (even assuming that children would not result)? We believe the answer is negative for the following reasons:

1. One of the deepest sources of mutual confidence in married life is the conviction that the partner is a person who has and can control his sexual impulses in accordance with principle. To be able to feel that he does not regard the satisfaction of sex lust more important than consideration for another's emotional safety and security is a source of lasting respect and confidence. To know that he was not victimized, even by sex love, to endanger the security of another, dissipates anxiety and uncertainty. "Even when Harry (or Judith) loved me, he (she) would not have sexual intercourse with me though I would have been willing"—such a thought grows good fruits in many later days of marriage. There will be darker days when sickness, separation owing to vocation (or a multitude of other good reasons) may mean long periods not only of enforced abstinence but of uncertainty about capacity for faithfulness. We know it is hard for a couple in love, feel-

ing the purity of their motive, to imagine such difficulties ever coming into their lives. But it is never too early or too late, especially in human affairs, to be reasonable, to act as far as possible with the whole situation in mind. If love is love, strong love, nonrationalizing love, it weighs the temporary values against the long-run values. For two young people to want each other desperately and yet to help each other find the control necessary (and we think that in most cases they need to help each other with sympathy and with firmness), here is an early victory. Here is the beginning of that quality of sexual control that makes it speak of love and not of rationalized desire that might injure or endanger the mental poise of another.

2. Two persons who really love each other are anxious to protect each other from experiences that may lead to loss of self-confidence or uncertainty. The real trouble lies in the fact that many lovers think that their main objective as lovers is to give the other what he or she wants, as opposed to what is going to be the foundation of further growth and creativity. Too many engaged couples have found the sexual experiences necessary, but many of these same couples have also admitted (at least such is their own confession) that they wished that they had waited. Why? An obvious and legitimate reason is that sexual intercourse before marriage takes the edge off the honeymoon and dulls the eagerness of anticipation for marriage. We would not discount this reason, for this sentiment is important. Some persons, unfortunately, do not realize soon enough how much such anticipation really does mean to them; they just do not enjoy Christmas presents or birthday presents that are opened before the day or are not properly wrapped.

But there are better and, perhaps, more vital reasons. Much as they might enjoy the sexual experience as such, one or the other feels that he is making a concession of his own principle to the inability of the other to wait. Assuming that one such experience is beautiful (and it rarely is because of the uncertainties that surround it), the couple then face their future until they can get married with the problem: Shall we now continue to engage as regularly as we wish in sexual intercourse? Not to do so now that the peak of the sexual progression has been reached, means that they must be satisfied with heavy petting. But this is no longer interesting or expressive and, as a continuing experience, may lay the foundation for mental disturbance. Shall they, then, go on with regular sexual experience? Here their peace of mind and moral equanimity are involved; immediate desire struggles with approved objectives, immediate self-interest with the long-run good of both persons.

Assuming that contraceptives insure against pregnancy, the young man who really loves his sweetheart must, nevertheless, remember that so long as he is not married to his beloved, he is endangering her emotional stability and moral security (even though she may now be willing to take all the risks). If anything should happen to make that marriage impossible (and there are too many engagements which simply do not come off), he has left her feeling that she cannot give her future husband what she and he really want. Nor am I thinking simply of virginity; that in itself is not so important as what it means to her, what she will think it may mean to another lover, and what it finally does mean to her husband. We are aware, and are glad, that there are persons who can forgive the sexual past of

their mates when they feel the reason is good. But the girl who in love has given herself to her sweetheart, and then honestly faces the possibility that marriage may not ensue, will not glow with happiness over the experience. For she will realize that beyond the anguish that will occur if the engagement is called off, lies the disappointment that she can no longer take pride in the feeling that she can come to her true love as she had planned. While we have made the girl the subject in these last few sentences, the same argument goes for the sensitive man even though, moral expectancies based on the "nature of men" being as low as they are, the case might not be so strong. The instances are not a few when the breaking of an engagement has left two persons with the desolate feeling that they have already frittered away an experience that they always wanted to use as a symbol of love, control, and mastery.

3. As a matter of fact, premarital sexual intercourse is itself frequently a cause of breaking up. As has been indicated, it is not an easy matter for two persons to find the desirable degree of psychophysiological harmony in the orgasm. When, in addition, the moral state of mind is at all disturbed, the psychological reaction may be even more difficult, let alone the fact that the edge is taken off the satisfaction. Premarital sexual experience hardly gives two persons the conditions or the chance to develop the harmony that may be possible for them when everything else in their lives supports their intercourse. A couple who run into sexual disharmony may draw the premature conclusion that they cannot adjust to each other, and one or the other (or both) may then prefer to break the engagement. Frequently neither sex nor love is given a fair

chance in premarital sexual intercourse. Admitted that there are some cases where premarital experience might reveal *real* biological causes of incompatibility, there are few of these that could not be discovered and predicted by adequate medical examination before marriage. If two lovers do not want to risk economic failure by too early marriage, or if they do not want to create hardship in other respects by early marriage, why should they face the uncertainties and possible hardships of sexual maladjustment under conditions most conducive to psychological and moral conflict? Psychological causes for maladjustment might be discovered, but little could be done about them that could not be better done within marriage, when both feel the responsible concern and assurance of another's loving encouragement.

4. All of the considerations so far advanced have dwelt on factors involving the personal emotional security of the lovers themselves. Let us now, recalling the fact that we were arguing as if contraceptives were absolutely adequate, remember that they are not, and argue in the light of that fact. We have not appealed to the interest that parents and the community legitimately have in a couple, not only for their own sakes but for their effectiveness as possible parents and citizens. Need we say that it takes more nerve than brain on the part of two persons to believe that their immediate happiness may justifiedly endanger the happiness of those who depend upon them to accept their share of personal discipline for the sake of the common good? Need we emphasize the emotional security and love that a helpless child needs (and is not so likely to get) when, coming into the world against the will of its parents, it threatens their sense of security? Let two lovers

who decide that they have a right to indulge their love before marriage ask themselves squarely whether they would prefer that all other persons who feel in love also engage in sexual intercourse. Let them ask whether they would consider it a good thing for all lovers to take their chances. Let them ask whether they think marriage and the home would be intrinsically safer because of such freedom, yes, whether they would be willing to recommend this premarital experience for their own sons and daughters? They can have a significant society that nurtures the highest values only when they do not make the rules for others to obey.

5. There is another aspect of the fact that two lovers are never sure that pregnancy will not result. The young man who urges his love for his sweetheart to justify intercourse needs to be reminded that his sweetheart can hardly be expected to participate wholeheartedly, even if he can, in an act that she fears may be followed by pregnancy. He will find that even after marriage one of the factors that she has to overcome is her built-up fear of unwanted pregnancy. For her to go on month after month wondering whether she is pregnant is not to encourage days of joy for his sweetheart, let alone for himself. When one considers how frequently newlyweds who had not planned on children "till later" blossom forth with the first products of their love, he is not inclined to underestimate the risk unwedded lovers take, especially since their experiences are not likely to take place under the best conditions.

If conception should take place, and the couple decide to accept the responsibility for their child, then the marriage that had been delayed earlier for good reason must

now take place rather rapidly and under circumstances that may not be happy for either the couple or their families and, least of all, for the person whom "he loved" so dearly. One does not need to witness more than a few of such hastened marriages, to doubt sincerely that the couple have been wise in expressing their love; and they are frequently the first ones to admit it as they accept their responsibility. If the dangers of abortion are risked, one may all the more question the cost of premarital intercourse.

We would much rather see a couple who feel they cannot or should not wait until marriage actually get married, and revise their plans accordingly, than have to begin a marriage in disappointment. Why should they get married with even a little bit of resentment at each other's imputed carelessness or be forced to live with each other under conditions in which, from the beginning, the personal and social problems of pregnancy are present? Intelligent, sensitive young people who honestly face the consequences of premarital sexual experience have hesitated with good reason to embark on a course that, whatever way one looks at it, takes the edge off real joy in marriage.

If Judith and Harry love each other so much, let them get married, even if it means other hardships. At least their love will not be irresponsible and parasitic; they are meeting their own problem together and protecting rather than endangering its emotional and moral roots.

Here parents and society can take a much more intelligent stand and help young people to help themselves establish their love and their home on the securer foundation of mutual concern. This is not the place to evaluate

various suggestions, such as state subsidies, for aiding earnest young people who are forced to delay their marriage for educational and economic reasons. Society is, however, already paying too much for late marriages, and too many Judiths and Harrys deserve much more consideration than they are getting.

But to urge that society and parents, wherever possible, make it easier for Judith and Harry to begin their marriage earlier without endangering the educational and vocational opportunities upon which so much of married life depends, is not even to suggest that Judiths and Harrys will not have to be honest about their fundamental hardships as lovers. Their problem is not one that can be completely eliminated by earlier marriage.

Their real problem is one which any two human beings take with them into married life. How can they together enjoy experiences that will develop and increase their treasure of values and forego those good things which would endanger the growth of their family happiness? The problem of the engagement period is, in fact, the much larger problem of deciding whether they can as two persons weld their lives together as continuers of the values which they have enjoyed. They can learn now the creative art of deferring a present good for a future greater good—perhaps the foundation of their own character and the character of their marriage and home. The engaged couple needs to learn what it takes to foster and preserve hard-won values—values won by the creative planning of others, values which can be preserved now only by creative control and development. Now they will decide whether as lovers they dare endanger the security of the values of their children.

6. In conclusion, persons like Judith and Harry can make this very struggle to keep their love responsible an experience of great personal and mutual satisfaction and pride. Indeed, by insisting that their love embrace more than themselves, they are developing now the kind of love upon which the home most depends. This is the kind of love that marriage calls for, day in and day out. How many times, as they try to build their home, will they have to deny themselves one "good" to insure a "better." Their achievement of sexual chastity is itself a witness to unselfish devotion to each other, their future family, and the social good. To feel that they can enter marriage with a clean emotional slate in this respect is as important as to feel that they have so loved and worked as to insure the financial and social aspects of their marriage.

Thus, let a couple not say that they are truly expressing their love when they engage in premarital intercourse, for they are actually willing to endanger the sense of emotional and moral security (let alone the biological and social) in each other. They are rather being overcome by "love" and seduced (be it at a higher level) into endangering values that are and should be prized, for the sake of an experience that can wait and be all the more worth-while because they have both co-operated in controlling their immediate satisfaction. Love that is dedicated to ideals, "to the good which lasts forever," transforms the persons and the quality of sex in human life.

To go back to our starting point, sexual love can never mean more than two persons bring to it. When their love for each other can *include their biological without excluding their social interests,* their self-respect, their mutual exploration of values, their ambitions and responsi-

bilities, then, indeed, it can be a continued blessing. It now bespeaks not only respect, good will, and devotion for the beloved, but it expresses respect and concern for all other persons who are in any way responsible for, and may be affected by, the existence of that love. Such love can be sure of itself on every score—the emotional security of children and a home, the interests of society, and the fulfillment of that strong human yearning to feel that one has dealt competently with the opportunities for realizing values life brings to him.

3

Are We Expecting Too Much from Human Nature?

It is the special quality of love not to be able to remain stationary, to be obliged to increase under pain of diminishing.

—ANDRÉ GIDE, *The Counterfeiters*

To love is to know the sacrifices which eternity exacts from life.

—JOHN OLIVER HOBBES, *School for Saints*

CENTRAL TO THE theme of these pages is the conviction that sex makes its deepest contribution to human experience only when it sensitively communicates the concern two persons have for each other's enduring happiness.

But there have also been, we are sure, lingering doubts. There will be many unanswered questions in the background, especially if the reader has been breathing in an environmental atmosphere where sexual expression, in limited or extreme degree, is taken for granted, where people think one is "puritanical and old-fashioned," "queer," or at least "surely inhibited or repressed" if he takes the line of thought here suggested. Let us, therefore, expand and discuss some of the more significant questions that demand attention if the discussion is not to ride roughshod over "real problems."

Some Reasons for Rationalizing

Does the prolonged inhibition of the sexual desire significantly weaken or disturb the balance in one's life? Is inhibition not a cause of nervous disorder? Is it not true that to suppress a strong urge like sex is unnatural, and that to do so for the long period between puberty and marriage endangers mental and physical health?

In answering these questions, we do not want to minimize the difficulty of sexual control in the life of any normal young man or woman. The sexual impulse is a strong and recurrent emotional drive. It certainly can cry aloud for expression. Indeed, when one's mind and body are alive with sexual excitement, one seems to transform even sexually neutral objects into sex stimuli; everything seems to excite desire. Few candid human beings would not admit the power that sexual stimulation can have on their psychological state of mind. In fact, we suspect that one of the reasons why human beings have despised and tabooed sex is that they realize the trouble it has caused them or their loved ones.

Nor is restraint made easier by the fact that sexual stimuli—movies, dress, magazines, radio, advertising, drama, and fiction—saturate the atmosphere. Is it really surprising that these excite a large amount of sexual expression? When, furthermore, we remember the uncreative conditions in which the majority of human beings live, we are not surprised that they succumb to the lure of strong and immediate pleasure. When we contemplate how inadequately children and adolescents are educated, not only with regard to the details of sex, but in the whole area of sex, love, and marriage, we wonder what reason there is for expecting better results. How frequently

have youngsters, stirred by powerful emotions, known only that "it isn't done by nice people," but not *why* it shouldn't be done, or how temptation might be overcome?

Young people are as smart as their parents in developing the rationalizations justifying their inability or unwillingness to control alluring sexual impulses. The man on the street talks about its being unnatural to suppress sexual desires, thinking perhaps of the freedom animals enjoy, or that a desire so strong as this was meant to be inhibited not inconveniently but discreetly. The college student, confronted by the problem of control, tends to develop the rationalization possible at his educational level. If he has been exposed to lectures and reading in psychology, he readily interprets what he reads and hears to mean that sexual inhibition is bad and produces neuroses and even psychoses. Give him one case history in which sexual maladjustment is a dominant factor, and it is amazing how quickly he infers that "psychology tells us that sexual inhibition is bad business." And if he has read or heard about Freud's theories, he expatiates upon the evils of repression. We are not trying here to make fun of the college student, or to say that in some psychological discussions his conclusions are not supported. We are rather underscoring the human tendency to find justification, at one's own level of education, for what one is strongly tempted to do. And we underscore it as a reminder that we need to be especially careful not to rationalize either our sympathies or our antipathies as we try to answer this difficult question about the effects of sex control.

Does Prolonged Inhibition Create Personality Problems?

Generalizations on this subject should always be subject to further criticism in the light of all the problems any given person faces. Each personality probably inherits factors that set up particular demands for satisfaction. These factors are affected by the life situation in which the person grows, and we can conceive situations in which, owing to the particular pattern of personality adjustment, prolonged inhibition might be unendurable or endured only with ill effects. Here, however, we are concerned with the general problem of inhibition. We shall summarize what seem to us to be substantial reasons for the conclusion that prolonged inhibition need not create personality disorder and, further, that sexual expression usually creates more difficulties than it solves.

1. Let us remind ourselves that each of us knows men and women who, like ourselves, have been "naturally" tempted and excited by sexual stimuli and who have found it possible to control their sexual desires for a lifetime. These persons have not become nervous or neurotic; they have not exhibited more personality defects than any other group of human beings. Such men and women, in every walk of life and not only in the teaching or clerical professions, have succeeded in making solid contributions to their communities without any supposedly monstrous wear and tear on their nerves. Of course their life has not been easy, but they thought out and guided their activities in ways that did not destroy their well-being in any significant manner. Certainly any scarring of personality on this score has not been greater than

the scarring among those who have "expressed" themselves. Persons who have controlled their desires should remind us that any theory of sexual inhibition or expression must take their control into account. It is hardly logical or fair to argue that they are exceptions to the rule, especially when they must be taken into account before a rule is formulated. Human beings who have yielded to their desires did not have to yield; they, for a host of excuses (sometimes reasons), have decided to give in to a strong impulse and "give out" in some other way.

What these abstainers can teach us is that if one is willing to undergo immediate hardship for the sake of other satisfactions he can do so, and without any serious marring of life. Did their testimony stand alone we might question it further, but which of us in his own experience, to the extent that he has yielded to temptation, cannot testify to the fact that even without excruciating effort he could have exercised greater control had he been really convinced that he wanted to or should? It is a fact that control is possible under normal conditions, where the individual has thought out a policy and strategy of control within the pattern of his own life situation.

2. We shall not forget the unusually healthy college sophomore who came to our office one day in considerable agitation. "How," she said, "am I going to control myself? It seems to me that this year, about every two or three weeks, I'll go crazy if I don't find sexual expression! I've paced up and down my room like a mad woman. I've just been lucky enough so far to go with boys who would not take advantage of my weakness, especially after some petting. This can't go on! I can't study! I can't do anything!"

We talked a while and she was able to map out for herself a plan of procedure, not only for the time of stress but for her collegiate weeks and months as a whole, *once she was convinced that she was right in her conviction that sexual expression was undesirable.* But the problem was not simply a matter of what to do with sex tension; she surely would go on experiencing tension and conflict. Nor was her problem one of holding it down, though this would always be a good part of her task. It was largely a matter of coming to terms more clearly with other needs and desires of her life, of keeping them alive in a co-operative manner. She realized that she was not getting the most out of her collegiate life in other ways, that she was not providing for adequate rest and exercise, for the lively growth of her social and intellectual interests. Above all, she had been pitying herself because she had "this awful problem." Thus, she resented undergoing periods of decided restlessness. She wanted "pie without pain."

The real difficulty was her attitude toward her uncomfortable restlessness. She had not yet learned what a young man had said when discussing his struggle: "It came to a point where I used to say when these tension periods came along: 'Well, well, are you here again, pal? Well, stick around while I go for a walk, or see the gang, or go to the dance, or plug for that exam.'" It is hard to develop a sense of humor about one's own sexual struggle, but once one decides to live with it instead of running away from it in abject self-pity, one has already begun to give the rest of his nature a chance to assert itself.

Of course we shall not be able to deal with sex tension or any other problem if we cannot develop our total schemes of life, our total personalities, so that in times of

special stress our total health can be a resource. We do not control anger just by fighting it, but by fighting it *and* by developing sympathy. Similarly, we can never control so strong an impulse as sex without understanding it, without being willing to live with it, and without integrating it into a larger pattern of satisfaction.

It is natural to be tempted to express oneself sexually, but it is not natural to succumb; it is easy to yield and thus endanger both its prolonged satisfaction and the satisfaction of other desires. A strong desire can be adequately restrained when one faces its reality along with the reality of other desires. The problem is to plan a long-run and day-by-day adjustment which will so tie these desires together that the greatest degree of satisfaction, and the least degree of frustration for all others, is assured.

Control, then, is not accomplished simply by taking something out of our lives, by inhibiting some desire or other. It is better accomplished by putting the things into our lives that will encourage whole satisfaction and not part pleasure. The main trouble with those who advocate sex expression, in fear that some disorder may result, is shortsightedness if not oversightedness. They forget that sex expression itself can lead to disorder in the total economy of our needs, desires, and abilities. *The problem is not expression or inhibition, but controlled expression.*

3. This leads me to insist upon a distinction between suppression and repression that needs to be kept in mind if either psychological theory or the facts of experience are to be made clear. It is true that the repression of sex is a cause of personality disturbance and sexual maladjustment. Repression of sex occurs when a person, out of fear or sense of acquired guilt, does not accept the fact that he

has sexual desire and, therefore, will not admit it into the conscious arena of his life. What he tends to do is to build mental barriers, rationalizations of one sort or another, against the desirability of sexual pleasure; he may even deny its existence in his life.

Some psychologists and psychoanalysts like to picture a subterranean dungeon in our lives in which this frustrated, seething, sexual activity is imprisoned, stamping around wildly as it waits for a chance to escape, in disguise if need be. Whatever the diagram may be, the fundamental fact seems to be that the individual in his past experience—frequently in childhood when he cannot understand much about sex but has been threatened with dire consequences if he expresses it—disowns his desire. Have you observed how a youngster will frequently say about the glass he carelessly but unexpectedly dropped, "It dropped all by itself"? In so doing, he refuses to admit his part in the "accident." Have you noticed that he will even sometimes disown his toy, now broken, by saying, "I didn't want it! It wasn't mine!" I suppose that any painful experience, especially if it shames us or promises to bring us future shame and harm, stands a good chance of being "forgotten" or disowned as being not "really me." The fact, nevertheless, remains that we, being the human beings that we are, cannot in this way amputate important desires. Our psychological being seems to be so unified that it does not allow one part to be forgotten without a fight to make a comeback. Thus, supposedly amputated desires remain as ways in which our psychological being asserts itself. We may decide to forget these desires, intolerable as they are to our proud egos, and we may think we have succeeded: "That won't trouble me

any more." But our vital needs go on asserting themselves, and we are, in fact, forced to expend much energy against the reassertion of sexual temptation. Being unable to amputate this desire in reality, we may find it causing a certain amount of uneasiness and nervousness lest it overcome resistances and unblushingly come plunging back to destroy the smooth tenor of our lives. Since it is not in our conscious control and lurks, as it were, in the outskirts of our approved activities and aims, we never know what it really is or exactly how strong it is or how to deal with it. Thus, in barricading our lives against its entrance, we also keep ourselves in ignorance of an activity in our lives that might be a source of real value and not simply a threat to our peace of mind.

This repression is undesirable, not only because it denies status to a legitimate urge, but because it is clearly not a safe way of dealing with the problem of control. Since the desire is not dead but simply unrecognized, it may in moments of weakness or special stimulation break out and ride over any resistance in a person who now is unable to deal with this stranger. Thus repression may invite disaster under special conditions and leave the person more uncertain than ever in his adjustment to sex.

Furthermore, repression may also serve to deny the real values of sexual satisfaction at a time when a normal human being would be only too glad to experience satisfaction and give satisfaction to another. Some persons, for example, get married and then find it impossible to respond to the caresses of their lovers, so strong is the habit of resistance and the fearful or anxious reaction which is connected with the idea of sexual expression. The boy (or girl) who had some emotionally shocking experience

involving sex at an earlier stage of life and in disgust put the whole business out of the area of approved action may have invited maladjustment in marital relations. For now, with the deep desire to say "I love you" by means of sex, an adequate sexual response may be impossible.

Let me digress for a paragraph. Part of the reason for making sure that children understand the nature of sex as they grow older is to avoid many of the feelings of uncertainty, fear, or guilt that imagination frequently conjures up where ignorance prevails, or where a subject is mysteriously veiled in secrecy. The trouble has been that even enlightened parents have thought that a good book or a good talk would take the place of what is really needed—an unemotional discussion of problems of adjustment as they come up from day to day, in an atmosphere that encourages interplay of opinion and confidence in the individual's ability to deal with this phase of his adjustment. Too frequently children, at a time when their understanding is far from complete, develop negative emotional sentiments toward sex that keep them from inviting information or discussion that would further clarify the meaning of sex in their lives. The child is left with part understanding and, especially if his later imaginings and experiences do not foster clearer understanding and confidence, he becomes an adult who is vulnerable to nervousness, insecurity, and disappointment, let alone guilt.

Repression, Freud and his followers have well taught us, is not control. It does not bring confidence or intelligent treatment of sexual problems, and it is for this reason that we have properly been warned about the undesirability of repression or its inadequacy as a mode of sexual

adjustment. But suppression is not repression, despite the similarity of sound and spelling. For suppression of sex is not the effect of misunderstanding, of anxiety or fear; it does not involve the person's minimizing, disparaging, or disowning the normal appeal of the sex impulse in his life. It calls, rather, for the conscious recognition of the part sexual impulses play in life. The individual experiences what desire means, and he may well regret that he can think of delightfully exploiting another for the sake of his own satisfaction, or he may be ashamed of the power sexual desires seem to have in his waking and dream life. However, instead of dissociating these "unclean" or "bad" impulses from his "real" self, he decides to do everything in his power to keep the sex impulse in its place and not let it run his life. He may not always succeed to the extent that he approves, but without self-pity he sacrifices the immediate pleasures of yielding to uncomfortable tension and simply sets himself against satisfaction. After all, if he can suffer later, he may as well suffer now at his own choosing and avoid later forced suffering.

This is not the place to discuss the problem of free will. But I am appealing to a fact of experience that must be admitted by any theorist, whatever the final explanation or theoretical description may be. We are constantly confronted with conflicting desires, and approving some more than others. We find ourselves exerting ourselves to inhibit the disapproved desires and provide a free play for those that are approved. If human beings could not inhibit or suppress strong desires which our reason disapproves, there would be no co-ordinated or co-operative action, and our individual and social lives would be a chaos. Let us develop theories of will or of sex which seem to ex-

plain this fact of inhibition, but let us not deny the fact to be explained, that human beings have managed to control some desires for the sake of others.

4. Suppression of sexual experience is possible for long periods of time, the more so the more intelligently the individual thinks out the other goals he wishes to achieve that presuppose such control. That suppression does not have bad psychological or physical effects is attested by the findings of a British committee of specialists including such scholars as Julian S. Huxley, J. Arthur Thomson, William Brown, and Crichton Miller. As Hornell Hart reports[1]: "This committee concluded that there is overwhelming evidence that irregular sexual relations, whether in the married or the unmarried, lead to physical, mental, and social harm; and that there is no evidence either from physiology, from psychology, or from experience, that for the unmarried sexual intercourse is a necessity for the maintenance of physical or of mental health."

But even if such a group of experts had not lent their support to our thesis, only a superficial thinker might readily conclude that it is more harmful to suppress the sex impulse than to suppress other desires and needs that would have to be suppressed if sex is prematurely expressed. The problem is one of choice. At worst it might be phrased: Which form of sacrifice or suffering is more worth-while in a lifetime, sex suppression or the suppression of the many other desires? True, these desires may not make so much noise; they are not so immediately disturbing; but without them even sex comes to have little point. As we have seen, expression as such increases the problem

[1] Hornell, N. and E. B. Hart, *Personality and the Family* (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1941).

of control even as it decreases the quality of satisfaction. The individual does not find the right way out of the sex problem by refusing to suppress his sexual desire in a manner calculated to give himself the self-mastery he needs and to give others the basis for confidence in his ability to protect their interests.

If the maturing person could keep reminding himself of the consequences of being self-indulgent, that he is not solving but aggravating his problem by sexual expression, that, for example, ten or fifteen years of self-restraint now will certainly help him to ensure many more years of qualitative satisfaction in the marriage relation—if he can meditate on these things in the light of his total plan of life, he may well find the rational and emotional incentive to forego immediate pleasures.

5. Understandably, however, young people, confronted with the immediate discomfort of sex tension and even the fear that something might happen to them if they persistently suppress this desire, easily maximize the pleasures and minimize the resultant displeasures. Especially is this so if they have been impressed by the fact, emphasized in much psychological and sociological literature, that many modern young men and women are forced, for economic and educational reasons, to postpone marriage much longer than did their fathers and grandfathers. But these same writings call attention to the fact that there is a great deal of difference between being biologically prepared for intercourse and being ready to be the partner of another in marriage, let alone the parent of children and the molder of attitudes of children toward life.

As human beings, we simply must face the disparity between our biological preparation and our cultural and

moral preparation for life's major tasks. That is our predicament. But it is not a predicament to which we must supinely yield as if we had no other resources for dealing with it. Self-pity and rationalization of a strong desire create the opening for uncritical underevaluation of the fact that we can, if we are willing, face up to our problems intelligently and consciously harness our energies to the tasks of life as a whole. It is just as human and natural to control desires as it is to have them in the first place. Our problem as human beings is to control them in a manner that will allow life to be complete and not stagger along from one moment of satisfaction to another. Were this not so, none of the values we do have would be realized, for life is a constant choice to resolve conflict. The human problem is not: To suffer conflict or not to suffer conflict? but: What conflict is worth the suffering? Which promises most?

When we tell ourselves that modern society makes great demands upon young people, that the mores run against the grain of life, we are telling part of the truth. But that part truth is worse than a lie if it is not followed by the realization that modern society not only heightens a conflict, one which is present throughout the breadth of life anyway, but repays with qualities of satisfaction otherwise impossible. Those who decide that the sexual desire is to be expressed whenever psychological and physiological tensions prompt simply do not share in this kind of satisfaction. We cannot have the quality of life shared by two mature people (as the basis for the kind of family life that treats each person as an end in himself) unless we are willing to sacrifice intelligently and wholeheartedly for it.

Investigations of the prevalence of sex experience outside the bounds of matrimony (as in the Kinsey studies) do not necessarily mean that our laws are ill-conceived and ineffective (though many certainly are in need of reform). Even the best laws will not be obeyed unless persons have the moral education and scientific understanding which encourages self-discipline. True, good laws alone will not make people good. Yet, we must remember that they can provide the cultural sanction for a better type of behavior than weaklings enjoy. The fact that laws are broken does not mean that they are not needed to help set the standard of worth-while living for those who are willing to discipline themselves. In any case, the disparity between practice and code of law calls for a re-examination of both and not simply a condemnation of one at the expense of the other. What we need is not simply to tell children and adults what is legal or illegal, but why these particular laws have become necessary, what dangers would face us were these laws not enforced. Thus we might uproot the erroneous and mischievous conception that laws keep individuals from having what they want.

Are Not Our Sexual Standards Artificial?

We must now turn to another lingering doubt, which is related to what we have been saying about the conflict between the sex desire and the social code. For I am sure that someone will say: In other societies, where no one expects young people to abstain from the satisfaction of their sexual desires, and where the element of fear and social ostracism is reduced to a minimum, there are no bad results, and people seem to be healthier in their attitudes

toward sex. May it not be, then, that in developing our social codes and laws we have created problems for young people that did not have to arise at all? Indeed, if a person just does not care about what society thinks, if he has no moral compunctions and, therefore, no resultant sense of guilt about his free sexual life, that person does not seem to suffer any of the disturbances associated with sexual repression.

And my reader might add: Are you sure that all the fuss you are making about sexual control, yes, even as a means to a fuller love relation, is worth the bother? Since sex is so recurrent in human life, would it not be better to remove the bars at this point and let individuals (and society) use the energy now spent in combatting "sexual license" for other desirable personal and social objectives? If we are actually pitting individuals against a drive that in their ripening years is a constant thorn in their sides, are we not really flagellating them unnecessarily? Why not make legal and acceptable what so many people are now doing covertly, and at the expense of an artificially created bad conscience?

Indeed, why not be sensible and scientific, and provide persons from adolescence on with knowledge of contraceptives and prophylactics so that they will be able to enjoy sexual relations with a minimum of fear and with a maximum of birth control? If, as they come into marriage, a couple did not expect premarital abstinence any more than they expect abstinence from other forms of social relations, it would not bother them, and marriage would not be undermined. After all, remember that a great many people even now are breaking the social code, for they reject the moral conception on which it is based.

They do not seem to be worse for it. Is it not our problem, then, really to recognize that our present moral and legal codes, developed in earlier stages of socio-economic-religious development, are no longer applicable and are, in fact, creating more problems today than they solve?

Thus many a thoughtful young person will argue. Remembering our own prolonged collegiate harangues and bull sessions, we can honestly say that this line of argument still strikes a sympathetic chord, especially when we note the great amount of time and energy young and old alike, in and out of family, spend in worrying about maintaining chastity. There are many difficult theoretical questions here, and we can no more than hint at an approach to them.

1. Let us not fool ourselves that we would minimize our social problems by making knowledge of prophylactics and contraceptives more available. Such knowledge and the medical attention necessary should be available as soon as possible, but not because in this way unwanted births might be decreased. There are no methods of contraception that are foolproof (aside from medical operations that keep sperm and ovum from making contact). Errors in adjustment and imperfection in the materials—let alone carelessness or even failure to use them—would certainly occur many times. Unless we were to make provision for an enormous program of legal abortions, a multitude of children would be born when neither father nor mother were mature enough or economically able to take care of their children.

Let us make no mistake about the choices before us. If our psychological and sociological investigations have told us much about the sex urge, they have also empha-

sized the need that infants and children have for feeling wanted and loved. The constant feeling of insecurity makes deeper inroads on healthy living than the frustration of sex as such. Parents must be psychologically and morally mature to help children meet their problems as they grow up. Our central obligation, therefore, is to preserve the kind of parental care that will enable children to feel at home in their world. To suppose that removal of social restraints regarding sexual control would take us nearer to this goal is to be blind to the many problems with which society would then be beset. Are we willing to have many more children born than can receive adequate care psychologically and morally? We might, indeed, decrease the number of sexual disturbances that are (supposedly) due to sexual inhibition, and increase the many other problems that occur when the life ventures of children and adults are rendered insecure and unstable.

Our choice is not between black and white, and any system will work hardship on many persons. But, surely, any suggestions that would tend to increase the number of inadequately cared-for children, let alone endanger the stability that monogamous marriage provides, cannot compare even with our present imperfect system. A main reason why those who now indulge in premarital sex experience, or even extramarital sex experience, can enjoy the supposed benefits of their "freedom" is that there are enough other human beings left who, despite their imperfections, stand by the system that does give the social stability needed. Let the order of the day emphasize not control but convenience, not long-range planning but "doing what I want when I want it," and it will not take long for physical and social decay to set in. Would this

be more "natural" than the kind of system we have? Can those who live by such parasitism honestly encourage others to join them as they "use" and endanger the lives of other persons in order to guarantee their own pleasures?

2. We might remind ourselves, before passing to the next point, that what recommends the idea of birth control is not that there may be a limitation in the number of children, but that birth of children can be controlled in a manner designed to ensure the most adequate care of the number of children a given family can absorb and support. We do not face the facts if we allow ourselves to forget that, the imperfections of contraceptives from the point of safety aside, they are aesthetically obnoxious, to say the least, to a large number of married people who use them only because they do want to limit their families or adequately space their children. The purpose of birth control is to help enrich the experience of sexual love by reducing the probability of pregnancy, and to increase the possibilities of health and education in a given family. The goal of birth control is to help improve the quality of adult life and the opportunities of children for sensitive nurture. To consider the use of contraceptives simply as a way of providing individuals with pleasure minus responsibility is to encourage the dilution of the meaning of sexual intercourse.

3. But these considerations are not so important as those pointed out earlier in discussing the sexual progression and the place of self-control in the complete enjoyment of sex experience itself. To express sex as sex with different "congenial" partners is to establish certain modes and tempos of response, many mental and emotional as-

sociations, that cannot be sloughed off at will. If we remember that sex itself is not the cause of love (though it is certainly a factor in love), but that love is a profound cause of sexual intimacy in human experience, we are confronted with another stubborn fact of our psychological nature that forces us to make a choice.

Let us assume that Dick or Jane have, as the supporter of sexual freedom would advocate, moved through their adolescence and early youth indulging their sexual urge discreetly and prudently. Since they have felt no rigorous moral compunctions or morbid sense of guilt, they are not vulnerable to mental disease, and, let us grant, they have enjoyed good, clean, fun on the sexual level. For they have experienced the release of sexual tension when they were really bothered, and they have been fortunate enough to find suitable partners with whom they shared normal, companionable relations and friendships. Let us make their case even stronger by assuming that their attitudes throughout their varied experience were not dominated by an abnormal, aggressive desire for mastery.

With this psychological orientation to men and women and sex, let us suppose that Dick and Jane meet each other and fall in love. They now *fall in love,* but their past experience has been of *falling in lust.* They now no longer anticipate a good-for-a-while relationship, but a lifelong partnership in which they may share as much of life's meaning as possible with each other and make each other the home base for all adventures in value. Two persons like these (whatever their past, I am assuming) want to be one; they want to feel unified in every way. For them the sexual experience, even if they had never had it before, would now be an opportunity demanded by the total im-

petus of their love and not merely their lust. This love dictates loyalty to each other, for it represents the fact that the other is valued above all others.

Is it now more serious psychologically and spiritually to disappoint the natural desires of sex than the natural desires of love for loyalty and concentrated devotion? What Dick and Jane want now supremely is love; and, speaking objectively, what they need is love if their lives are to have the quality and inspiration that love contributes to life. Yet the Dick-and-Jane-in-love are confronted by the Dick-and-Jane-in-lust, and the habits of the past—such as finding the attractive physical specimen to share the pleasure of lust, such as desiring sexual experience every so often and in a certain manner or mode—now assert themselves. Here, let us emphasize, *it is not society that is making artificial laws which cause conflict and make them unhappy; it is the psychological laws of their natures as human beings.* Lust and the habits of lust stand in conflict with love and the demands of love. The past of life, enhanced and strengthened by habit, stands in defiance of the development of life as a whole. Dick and Jane want each other completely, dependably, forever. They do not want to feel that the sexual habits of the past may break up something which they now so wholly approve. They dread the thought that their past may threaten the foundations of their happiness together as central units of a family. If Jane and Dick are honest with themselves and with each other, they may well pause and face the fact that, much as they wish to follow the high, broad avenue of growth, because of their past habits they are better fitted to travel the lower, narrower streets of sexual satisfaction.

Let us now assume that, having become engaged, they find it impossible because of established habits to refrain from sexual intercourse. But the sexual intercourse they now want is more than the satisfaction of a strong urge. They want to express their love by the very actions which in the past have expressed lust. They want so much to have this experience say what they cannot say in words. They want everything to be perfect. But now past habits of response, and many past associations with this act, crowd in upon the activity of mind and body, barring the way to the kind of unity and satisfaction their love calls for. It is not society which is barring their way to joy and peace now, but their own past in conflict with the present. Society and its laws did not artificially create this situation. It is the psychological structure of Jane and Dick—the way their natures work out once they have made certain choices. The problem they have—the struggle between self-satisfying lust and other-regarding love—is one their natures would develop in *any* social situation (assuming the value of love). They may, indeed, after a kind of discipline they are not used to, be able to make their way to a harmonious unity of confident love, but the struggle before them is not artificially created by society.

It will not be forgotten, of course, that two other persons, Harry and Judith, despite their controlled psychological past, may have difficulty in achieving the kind of sexual unity that will adequately re-create their bodies and minds. But, we hold out much more hope for their achievement of this unity and for the prolongation and enrichment of this love than we do for Jane and Dick. And happily it cannot be asserted that Jane and Dick may not

under the incentive and inspiration of their love find their way with patience, mutual forgiveness, and persistent self-discipline to the kind of unity, mutual confidence, and loyalty to which their love aspires. Nevertheless, the moral attitudes and psychological habits of Dick and Jane may well stand in the way of the present satisfaction of their love. These attitudes and habits may destroy more than one moment of peace and trust, especially when the other tensions of married partnership and home building come into their lives. Once more, then, we come back to a question we have been asking over and over in these pages: When we are honest with the facts of our lives, and when we consider what we desire from life as a whole, is the satisfaction of sex lust along the way worth it? Do we not, in fact, endanger or sacrifice our unique heritage of love for a mess of pottage by thinking that we have solved the sex problem by convenient expression?

In a society where people came together physically and separated whenever they pleased, one might be tempted to think that artificial frustrations would be avoided. But how sure could we be that both persons would find it convenient to separate at the same time? The one who gets caught by love suffers. In the midst of their enjoyment can they keep from being haunted by the knowledge that on their principle of action one or the other may change his mind when he pleases? These are not problems society's codes create. They are snares into which our human nature falls once we play fast and loose with it.

4. Before closing this section, we must dwell a little longer on another aspect of the suggestion that it is society which makes all the trouble by imposing unnatural standards of conduct on the young. When we talk this

way, we seem to assume that our forebears had somehow discovered and forced upon their children a group of moral edicts that had no intimate relation to their needs. Now, it is certainly true that this attitude of the law enforcer has been present in a great deal of societal restriction on human beings. No doubt many laws have been enforced that took little or no account of the needs and desires of the persons who were expected to live by them. They do reflect a slave morality.

Some philosophical and theological theories of law easily lend themselves to manipulation of persons rather than to a regard for the growth of persons. Against them let us assert quite vigorously that human beings are not to be considered the playthings of the gods or, for that matter, of fate, let alone of society or state or church. But it is a great calamity that persons whom study should have at least rendered more cautious make the puerile assertion that the restrictions upon sexual behavior have been imposed only by the philosophical rationalizations of ascetic kill-joys who had little regard for the normal enjoyments of normal persons. It is true that sexual restraint has been advocated in the name of, and as the will of, God. But let it be remembered that God was usually considered not the torturer of little children, but the lover of men. If more of the truth be known, we suspect that the will of God was indeed called in to back up what was shrewdly observed to be a law of the human nature—which, incidentally, God had made that way! This is not the place to review and refute different theories, for the question is an involved one. But it seems fair to say that it is erroneous to maintain that the grounds of sexual control lie not in the nature of human experience and experi-

ment, but in artificial restraints imposed without any realistic justification by society.

That there must be some control of sexual activity is patent in any reflective analysis of the problem of human beings as they come together. Different societies may exercise different controls in order to preserve their form of social organization. Sometimes the controls may be to encourage persons to have more sexual experience, more wives or husbands, and more children. However, we make serious mistakes in the study of values when we compare a mode of behavior in one society with a similar mode of behavior in another without carefully evaluating each mode in the light of the total pattern of values and customs in each society. The fact is that each society must pay in some way or other for the controls that it seeks to enforce on sex, or on property, education, or anything else, for that matter.

The real question, therefore, is: What form of society, what kind of institutions will help human beings in their situations to complete their lives and fulfill their potentialities in the richest possible manner and with the minimum of fruitless frustration? One part of this large question seems clear, namely, that a monogamous home built about confident, controlled love is the best kind of insurance for the growth of human beings and the symphonic satisfaction of human drives.

We can imagine societies in which ideological, economic, and social problems would be such that the kind of love and home we have in mind is beyond present reach and grasp. Theirs, then, would have to be a different form of social code, and that code might work better for them without home-building possibilities than it would for us.

But it does not mean that they too would not be better off if they could pay the price for the kind of human love and nurture that joins two lovers and their progeny in a common pursuit of creative living. The problem every person and every society has to face is: Do we want to protect the experience of love even more than the experience of sex? If we agree that the experience of love, given the structure of human beings, is endangered by the expression of sex as an end in itself, then we must organize our institutions and educational efforts to encourage love. And we must discipline sex for the sake of love. With these thoughts in mind, we may profitably examine some comments made by Kinsey regarding some of his data.

What Follows from Kinsey's Data?

According to Kinsey's data, the highest incidence of premarital intercourse falls in the late teens (p. 249). To quote: "For the total population, the highest frequency of premarital intercourse occurs in the 16-20 year groups" (p. 251). "In the population as a whole, among boys in their teens, about 8 per cent of the total sexual outlet is derived from the homosexual" (p. 261). These and other data given by Kinsey not only indicate the need for a more adequate education, but accentuate the problem all of us face in developing the kind of social organization that will ensure the highest variety of value that human experience makes possible. But there is a questionable interpretative statement that reveals a frame of mind that is frequently found in scientific writings:

> On the other hand, the fact that the single male, from adolescence to 30 years of age, does have a frequency of nearly 3.0 per week, is evidence of the ineffectiveness of

> social restrictions and of the imperativeness of the biologic demands. For those who like the term, it is clear that there is a sexual drive which cannot be set aside for any large portion of the population, by any sort of social convention. For those who prefer to think in simpler terms of action and reaction, it is a picture of an animal who, however civilized or cultured, continues to respond to the constantly present sexual stimuli albeit with some social and physical restraints (p. 269).

Now there is a great deal of difference between saying that a sexual drive *has not* been set aside (and a quantitative investigation of stealing, lying, and cruelty would create an even stronger impression of human errancy) and saying that it *cannot* be set aside. There might be more ground for such a statement if we were to think of sex as a mere rigid impulse in an animal. We might then restrict ourselves to making laws that correspond to the quantitative expression of sex—just as the aim of our economic system might be conceived to be one of satisfying the hunger and survival needs of persons. But if we are to interpret "sex as a normal biologic function, acceptable in whatever form it is manifested" (pp. 262, 263)—and one suspects that Kinsey agrees with this Freudian view as he sees it—then we shall have to forfeit those very aspects of the sexual experience that render it uniquely human. It could no longer be a beautiful symbolic expression of creative unity between lovers.

To be sure, we can be more certain of our scientific quantitative conclusions than we can be about the qualitative meaning of sex experience in human life. We cannot hold it against a book which purports to be a quantitative study of sexual outlets that it is not a qualitative study. But statements such as those quoted, made on the

basis of a quantitative study that throws no light on the quality of the experience in question, may lead us off the path we need to pursue if we are to find the best humanly possible in sex. These statements indicate how easily we can be misled into forgetting that we are trying to preserve the *quality* of human experience at its best and *not avoid conflicts simply because they are conflicts.* Self-expression, it cannot be said frequently enough, is not self-realization.

This does not mean that existing institutions cannot be improved.

We must develop, and revamp when necessary, every educational, economic, social, and religious means at our disposal to help young and old understand and appreciate the meaning of sex and love in their lives. But we certainly must not change our laws just to avoid being bothered by the thought that large numbers of persons are beyond legal bounds. Laws that are inadequate, that do not meet the real need of human beings, must be changed. But let us be reasonably sure that more persons will be encouraged by the alterations to find the more complete meaning of sex.

Nor can we forget, as we try to relieve some tensions, that we may be creating others that are even worse. For example, in our thinking about relieving the prolonged period of sexual control imposed upon sexually mature adolescents, we must not encourage the birth of children to parents who are emotionally immature and incapable of providing good homes, psychologically, for their children. Would that it were easier to know how to preserve the qualitative values of monogamous marriage without enforcing on many what seem like unnecessary hardships.

But hardship is not unnecessary when it ensures variety and depth of value for all concerned, especially the emotional warmth and mutual concern of family life. If we need to be alert to avoid the needless suffering social institutions may impose, we must also be sure that we do not endanger the qualitative good of all in unintelligent sympathy for those who, consciously or unconsciously, will not accept the responsibility for social values.

We must reconsider, then, facile statements that society is making trouble for helpless children, adolescents, and young people by imposing on them unnecessary, cruel codes that take the joy out of life. To be sure, our modes of enforcement and the particular laws we develop in different communities frequently work in such a way that unnecessary hardship and cruelty betray the enlightened spirit which led to restriction in the first place. Such cruelty can be outlawed. But the cruelty which sometimes results from law is not worse than that which sometimes accrues to human beings otherwise. Every parent knows he sometimes punishes his children because he is unwittingly annoyed at the trouble they have caused him; his spirit is vindictive and mean. He has forgotten that punishment must be redemptive. It must help his children to reconstruct thought and action. But sometimes he punishes them not because he wants to "get back at them," but because he wants them to avoid the greater disasters that will befall them unless they learn to discipline themselves in the light of reason.

In an analogous way many of our laws, and those with regard to sex behavior are an unusually good instance, have frequently been born of a vindictive rather than a redemptive or protective spirit. But while we realize the

harm that is done by such imperfection and mismanagement of our social legislation, while we realize that society is frequently unfair and unintelligent in these matters, we must not overlook the central insight and truth which, over the years, has become the core of our social thinking. None of us is free to do what he wants when he wants, not only because of the effect on his own development, but also because of the effect on the wants and needs of others. In other words, if society did not punish us, life itself, that is, the laws of our own development as human beings, would do so. We would lose values that might have been ours had we exercised intelligent and reasonable control of our wants and abilities. Since sex is such an important want and need, since it does so deeply affect the lives of others, since it is so intimately connected with the experience of love, we can never isolate it either in theory or practice from the effect it can have on the quality of our total existence.

Is Sexual Guilt Not an Artificial Barrier?

If boy or girl were not taught to inhibit their sexual desires, and if as young people they felt no moral guilt or anxiety about it, would it have any bad effect on their lives? The answer is: If, indeed, they had no moral compunctions about free sexual expression, it would not produce mental disturbance, for no real conflict would be set up in their lives. But if these persons ever decided to move into the area of love, they might well expect conflict, and then other disturbances would have to be faced. No one could predict the outcome.

But when we say that some sexual promiscuity will not have a bad effect, I suspect we have in mind mental dis-

order rooted in the sex-conscience conflict. It is unfortunate that so many of us have got into the habit of thinking that if we do not develop a neurosis we are not being badly affected. But here we really misinterpret what our psychology does in fact teach us. As might be expected, we know the diseased extreme better than we understand what makes for the most effective and enduring health.

Does the fact that a person does not develop a neurosis, owing to the fact that he has no moral compunctions about premarital or extramarital sex-expression, mean that he is better off because he is expressing sex? Study that person's life carefully—his attitudes toward himself, his sense of responsibility for the needs of others—and you may well discover a weakness of moral fiber, of capacity to get the most out of himself despite hardship and sacrifice. What does such a person do in the presence of frustration now? What will he do if he ever undertakes a vocation and marriage, in which there will be great need for willingness to forego present personal pleasures for the sake of later satisfactions? The person who can pleasurably indulge in sexual intercourse owing to his freedom from moral guilt may escape a "complex" or specific mental disorder, but when the total quality of his life is analyzed, when his human sensitiveness and his capacity to forego self-indulgence for the sake of others is evaluated, the deficit in his personality may be more serious than he realizes.

One other fact of experience must be emphasized in relation to this question. I have listened frequently to young men and women, some of them engaged, who because of their thwarted desires for sexual intercourse have wished that they had never been brought up to think it's "bad."

And some have concluded that "since we only think it's bad and it really isn't, there really is no good reason why we shouldn't express our desires." Many young people who have gone this way have discovered, to their dismay and undiminished sense of guilt, that their conscience would not keep quiet just because they told it that it was all wrong.

We cannot here discuss the whole problem of conscience, though we must protest the oversimplified and superficially "scientific" accounts of it given by those who reduce it merely to the watchdog voice of society in us. Whatever final theoretical position we take, the fact cannot be forgotten that it does no good to try to laugh off a "conscience," and it frequently does much harm. Laughing the conscience off is hardly the way to get rid of it, any more than laughing away sex or any other strong desire exiles it. It is not impossible to change the content of one's conscience so that it will take account of the present actualities of life as well as of the past. A person whose conscience tells him that every manifestation of sex is bad may be suffering from a distasteful emotional experience in childhood which he then illogically generalized. It will take him time and effort of thought and will to feel differently about that verdict and change his conscience at that point. During the interlude, when his conscience is changing, he will experience the uncertainty that goes with any new development. One does not, however, make a new conscience simply by breaking the old one. The redirection calls for painstaking insight and effort if it is going to represent a real, unified growth of the personality.

Let us apply this fact to the question before us. Too

many young people are sure that, in view of the strength of their desire for each other, they can dismiss the conscientious scruples which have been exerting themselves, enter into sex experience, enjoy it thoroughly, and never feel any aftereffects. "After all," they may say, "this conscience about sex is just a fairy tale I picked up in my childhood, like the idea of Santa Claus." But then they find that the experience does not take up the whole mind, that they did not enjoy it quite as much as they thought they would. Later they find that they do keep on feeling guilty about it. Both the possibility of premarital sex experience and the whole idea of sex experience now evoke guilt. Thus, when the sex experience is later to be used as an expression of marital love, it comes into mind with the guilt feeling attached, to destroy what might otherwise be a communication of undivided devotion and love.

This kind of effect was quite clear in the experience of Arthur and Ethel. Arthur had been brought up on the idea that sex should express love and that it should be a bond in married love only. The war came on when he was a sophomore in college and interrupted his life and the normal course of an excellent relation with Ethel. On one of his three-day leaves Ethel met him half-way across the country, so that they could be together longer. They had earlier discussed the possibility of sexual experience, and we suspect that under normal peacetime conditions they would have abstained from sexual intercourse despite their strong love for each other. Now, however, they convinced each other at their hotel that those compunctions they had been feeling about "going all the way" were silly residuals of childhood. They met each other on sev-

eral other occasions and shared their love with each other.

The last time we saw Ethel she said that soon after Arthur had returned to college, his work (he had been a college leader and an excellent scholar) had gone to pieces, he had broken his engagement and had written her excoriating letters filled with bitterness and the feeling that she had allowed him to make a mess of his life. Anyway, he was no longer any good. We are afraid that Arthur's conscience is still barking, and that the guilt he has been feeling at this point is so heavy upon him that he has allowed it to seep into other areas of his life. And now Ethel, whose conscience "didn't feel too bad" earlier, is miserable, not only about the breaking of the engagement, but also about his attitude toward himself and toward her. This is only one instance of a truth we need to remember, that our conscience, whatever its ultimate nature, has a way of staying with us, and that we are being more than careless when we think we can change it *simply by breaking it.*

In a chapter in which we have been considering lingering doubts, we must not leave the impression of being satisfied with the present status of morality or custom on these problems. It has been our concern to suggest rather the direction in which we need to go in our thinking. What is really disturbing is the fact that so few people are getting from sex the profound, creative experience possible through it. People are cheating themselves of the deeper possibilities sex experience can open to them *if* it symbolically binds together two personalities committed to each other, to their God, their children, and their civil responsibilities. Comparatively speaking, persons are at

present experiencing jazz when they might know the stirring themes of symphonies. Our task is not so much to control sex as it is to increase every opportunity for understanding and for growth of personality. Crusades against sex will not do what we really need to do—work with intelligent commitment to the kind of living in which love for others and respect for self are the magnetic poles.

From the cradle to the grave, literally, our task is to develop appreciation for the enriching responsibilities and activities of human experience and, within these, the meaning of sex and love. And we need, as part of this total conception, to change our attitude toward those who have failed to meet their social responsibilities from one of vindictive punishment to one of understanding redirection. Only thus may such persons re-enter, as far as possible for them, into their heritage of sex, love, and family. We do not protect society simply by penalizing its weaker members, especially when this frequently means hurting their children more than they need to be hurt. We help society—indeed, we prove that we have the highest and most stable type of society—when we can help those who fall by the way to rediscover their good potentialities and rebuild them.

4

Some Roots of Creative Marriage

Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil, rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

I Corinthians

They Stand at an Altar

Someone has said that marriage can be holy wedlock or unholy deadlock. Certain it is that lovers who meet at the altar, even when that meeting is little more than ritual, join each other in consecrating themselves to each other's happiness. It is a moment of victory, and a moment of faith. There are none who can show just grounds for their not being married, and they are convinced that this is "the finest thing that ever happened." Life is really beginning now. With the approval of the state, in the presence of friends and loved ones, and in the spirit of love, they publicly accept the private and social responsibility of their love.

There is a symbolism about a church wedding in particular that is inspiring to contemplate, even when many of those present do not take religion seriously. Here are the parents, the relatives, the friends, gathered to express

their affection and good will, their joy in what is being achieved, and their hopes for the future. They all stand at the altar, for, in a real sense, whatever happens to these two will happen to them also; they "stand behind" the couple as they consecrate themselves.

Those who are already married, the mothers and fathers, witness the dedication with a special solemnity. There is a "full" quietness as the ceremony takes place. While the parents watch their children, pride and apprehension mingle. They know in a more intimate way the habits and hopes in each life, and they pray that these two will realize their dream.

Every public wedding means at least this much. Two persons meet in the presence of those who care and are married in the name of the Commonwealth. But, let us assume that they stand in the presence of God, as he is conceived in the Hebrew-Christian tradition, the loving Father dedicated to the creative growth of his children. Our lovers now stand quietly and humbly in the belief that this marriage is God's adventure too, that he cares what happens to each of them, to their loved ones, friends, and children. Here the symbolism reaches a cosmic meaning. They pray that they will have no other gods before them, that their wedding may be not only an adventure in social living, but a determined effort to hold each other up before God, serving, worshiping, and creating. Such a wedding is, indeed, a uniquely human symbol. How better bring together all that the human venture on earth can signify? Such wedlock is holy. It is an experience apart, an act supremely different, for it dedicates human love to love at its best.

If a man's religion is the tie that binds him to the

Source of Supreme Values, his marriage is the tie which at once binds him more responsibly to God and man, for this person he loves is loved of God and of her parents and friends, and the children that will come are God's concern, his concern, and the concern of relatives and society. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and thy beloved as his child!* Let two persons love each other in this spirit, let them *will* the kind of love in which the God of mercy and creative joy can participate, and they will stand at a cosmic altar the rest of their lives.

It does make a difference at what altar two lovers stand now and throughout their lives. How much difference, and what quality of life is sought by two lovers, depends upon the kind of God (or philosophy of life) to which they devote their wills. Any two persons need to be as clear about such basic convictions as they can be. Ultimately, they need to know in what kind of reality they believe their love and their lives take root. The purpose of this chapter, however, is to describe the convictions, other than the religious, which two persons need if their marriage is to develop them to the utmost and be a source of common good.

The Incentive of Love

If one should look back over these pages from the perspective of persons who are mothers and fathers, emphasis on the meaning of sex love may well seem an unfortunate distortion. We have, indeed, created a false impression if the reader had concluded that once two persons are prepared for harmonious sexual love, they are prepared to cope adequately with the other intimate human rela-

tions of married life and homemaking. If we have seemed to overemphasize the importance of harmony in this relation, it is only because the breach of it does so frequently threaten every other adjustment two lovers make. But the basic thesis has been that the meaning and value of the sexual experience in two lives is a by-product of the struggle for harmonious and fruitful togetherness. No intimate human experience, and that of love the least, is richer than the participants. It is not the mere fact of physical harmony in sexual intercourse that is important, but the symbolic meaning of that act that enriches human existence.

One may shake the hand of a stranger, an acquaintance, a friend with increasing degrees of commitment and mutual appreciation. The physical handshake means no more than it symbolizes. But let the handshake be that of a father and son as the latter leaves for war, and one realizes how inadequate such an action is to express what the two must feel. So, let the physical sexual act bring together two persons who have undergone much together in their attempt to develop a home for themselves and their growing children, let it bring together two who have experienced the joy of seeing a son admired by his comrades, who have helped a daughter endure serious illness, and we realize that the physical fact of sex harmony at its best will not begin to exhaust the meaning of these lovers to each other.

If, however, this analysis is at all true, it forces upon us the realization that the quality of love throughout marriage depends on all the other qualities that two lives enjoy. *The kind of unity or harmony created in any marriage is not an accident. Any marriage continues, in a new*

form and with a new challenge, the course of life the two persons have already lived. Still, no matter how much alike two persons are in their outlook on life, their marriage means adjustments. What they do will be affected not only by circumstances frequently beyond their control in each situation they confront, but by the habits of living, feeling, and thinking which they bring with them from their past experiences.

One of the most serious misconceptions young people form about love might be called the "bank deposit" conception. Love is unconsciously regarded as a quantity of feeling which is stored up in each person as in a safety deposit vault. This treasure can then be drawn upon as difficulties enter their marriage. If two persons love each other enough, it is felt, they can find a way to meet all obligations.

This conception, however, has more romance in it than understanding. For love is not a lump of intense emotion which sweetens all the bitter in life. Nor is it a solvent for the problems persons face from day to day. To be sure, two persons who are very much in love with each other are motivated by a concern for each other's growth, and their love can lead to the reorganization of all the incentives in their lives. But it cannot do this and remain static. As it guides and initiates change, love itself grows. As it sustains hope and trust, love itself is redirected, like a busy mother attentive to the needs of her different children.

Yes, love is a hunger for growth in goodness and beauty, but love—be it the noblest—is still one force among others in the life of two persons. It may never become the master in two lives simply because it does not have

enough support from the emotional and intellectual habits in the personality of each person. *Therefore, love in itself cannot guarantee the highest qualities in marriage; altogether too frequently it is destroyed by the other desires, habits, and traits of the individuals.* Only as the person succeeds in inspiring more of his thoughts and actions by the incentive of love does it grow.

A marriage of love, then, draws two persons together in dedication to each other as persons; but it draws together two persons whose potentialities have been trained in varied fields of human activity, in different families, schools, social groups, churches, and vocations. Marriage will create new growth as these two persons devote themselves to the building of their own family and the world they will share with their children.

The Importance of Background

We are tempted at this point to stress the importance of the many social, economic, educational, and religious factors that any two lovers need to consider if they would develop their love with a minimum of strain. We would not underemphasize these factors either individually or as a whole, but we shall not even try to outline the pertinent considerations in this study. The reader is here referred to discussions in many sociological treatments of love and marriage. It is our purpose rather to call attention to moral traits—by no means exhaustively—that seem necessary for the growth of two persons in marriage and for the creation of the kind of home in which children find moral inspiration.

The stress is not to be placed on the social environment, the economic, educational, and religious back-

ground of each individual as such, but on the pattern of personality, character, and aspiration in which these have resulted. There are persons who have lived in what might be considered underprivileged conditions in these respects who have developed a deeper appreciation of social, educational, and religious values than others who, in their relatively superior circumstances, have taken these things for granted. Such persons, despite their "good background," never come to know what these values cost in human effort and do not appreciate what their absence means in human life. We make these statements not to minimize environmental background, but to emphasize the fact that compatibility is not determined by external circumstances as such. It is the particular effect of circumstances on the character and personal outlook of the individual that is important. The environment is better judged by the person than the person by the environment.

A specific example involving religious backgrounds may clarify our meaning. The person who is unchurched may be found by a loyal churchman to have a profound conception of, and feeling for, the reality of God even though he has an inadequate appreciation, perhaps, of the values of church membership. There might well be more creative religion in the marriage of two such persons than that of two loyal churchmen, one of whom may be loyal to the organization but superficial in religious feeling and conception. Similarity of religious denomination or activity does not necessarily guarantee compatibility. It is the impact of religion on the two lives, on the ability of the couple to live together religiously at home, at work, and at church, that needs to be stressed. The resultant direc-

tions in each life are more important than the details of background.

These, of course, cannot be treated too lightly since the particular environment creates specific associations, habits, and mental expectations whose power over the person may be much greater than he suspects. The Jewish young man who said he was not Jewish in cultural background and felt complete spiritual harmony with his Protestant sweetheart was surprised at his own emotional response when asked how he would feel about a Christmas tree in his home. For this couple to be aware of this possible difficulty was to help resolve it. They both believed in being reasonable, and they have built a fine home and family on this mutual trait. The differences in background were resolvable because they had already worked out in their different environments *a similar approach to problems and a common feeling for certain values that made their home a unity.*

Similarly, two persons from different economic backgrounds may find that, owing to "what they were used to," they demand different things for their physical comfort. This might cause more difficulty about the so-called little things than either suspects. One partner, reared in middle-class circumstances, might be annoyed by the fact that the kitchen needs repainting or that the children are walking on worn-out heels or wearing coats an additional year or that the margin between income and outgo is so close. The partner whose earlier economic habits lead him to regard these as luxuries may be surprised at the distress these circumstances cause his beloved. But if these two persons do agree on the use of money and the relative importance of economic security, they probably will work

out their differences more intelligently than will two persons of the same economic background who do not agree on the place of money in life. *In the last analysis, then, circumstances and background are not so important as the philosophy of life and the personal virtues which individuals develop in those circumstances.* It is for this reason that we propose to spend the remainder of this chapter on the virtues that seem most conducive to the kind of happiness that marriage can create.

The Moral Roots of Creative Marriage

1. *Honesty.* To live with another person means to entrust many of one's values to the action and purposes of that person, and to be responsible in turn for many of his (or her) values. There can be no creative partnership where there is no confidence and trust. Is there anything that can so readily create lack of confidence and distrust as dishonesty? *Honesty is the willingness to convey a true impression of one's own actions and motives.* It is more than "telling the truth"; we frequently tell the truth when we hope thereby to suggest a false impression of what the real situation is. The honest person accepts the responsibility of conveying the truth, to himself and others.

The young couple who march triumphantly from church will find it all too easy to be dishonest with each other. To be married is to expose one's life to the scrutiny of another who has married with great expectations, and the very knowledge of that fact may lead one to be secretive of weaknesses or failures. The young bride may convey a false impression when a truer one would enable her husband to know the situations that they need to accept

or overcome together. Fortunate it is that human beings usually begin married life with an altruistic love that enables them to make light of weaknesses that might otherwise loom larger. All the more reason, then, not to deceive the other about those things that happen from day to day which he should know if he is to be a partner in need. There are none who can afford to be so honest with each other as those who love each other. If this love is going to work in their lives, and if their lives are to grow by mutual appreciation, criticism, and sharing of responsibility, it must be based on fact.

It is much easier to define the goal here than to translate it into action. For there is an art of being honest. One is not honest just to be honest; he does not unload his life of sin in a kind of confessional, so as to say, "I told you," and thus relieve himself of the pain or guilt of secretiveness. And one is not secretive or deceitful in order to protect himself from criticism and avoid unpleasant consequences.

The problem of being honest is the problem of conveying to each person involved what each needs to know in order to plan and act *with reality in mind.* Simply to blurt out the truth "frankly" may create the wrong impression in the mind of that particular person. There is a place and time and a way adapted to him. It is not easy to keep honesty consistent with kindness. Honesty may well be considered a long-run kindness to all concerned, provided the motive for honesty is helpfulness. We cannot say more than this, beyond insisting that if two persons can trust each other's willingness to tell the truth humbly and not boastfully, concernedly and not in the spirit of criticism, good-humoredly and not in self-righteousness,

their love can move close to the center of their inner struggle to increase values.

It may be well at this point to call attention to an allied virtue, which at once broadens the perspective of honesty and helps to maintain poise and balance in life. We refer to a sense of humor—we almost said a sense of life. A sense of humor is not to be confused with the ability to see the point of a joke or some comic situation, though this is not excluded. As Professor Allport has indicated,[1] it is a product of insight into the difference between what one is and what he thinks he is. But the sense of humor is more than knowing the difference between pretension and performance; it is more than knowing oneself "soberly." It is an attitude one takes toward such knowledge because he sees himself in the perspective, not simply of his own efforts, but of his relation to the whole human enterprise. Personal disappointments are not viewed with a sense of "why did this have to happen to me," and personal triumphs are not overrated with the remark, "I'm pretty good!"

Persons who lack a sense of humor usually are unwilling to look at all the facts available about themselves and their efforts. Allport says:[2] "True humor has been defined by the novelist Meredith as the ability to laugh at the things one loves (including, of course, oneself and all that pertains to oneself), and still to love them." Each person should develop "a sensitive and intricate balance . . . between caring and not caring, between valuing and recognizing the vanity of valuing." Yet it must be emphasized

[1] G. W. Allport, *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1937).

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 223 ff.

that a sense of humor does not mean that one takes nothing seriously or tries to laugh everything off defensively. Rather does it inspire him to live without calculating the return for every single effort. Thus, lovers who lack a sense of humor tend to take their efforts in marriage so seriously that every one of their motives and sacrifices is weighed as if their whole marriage depended on that effort rather than on the spirit in effort. They become not only hard to live with but are always tied up in a knot emotionally. Finally, it may be suggested, the sense of humor, easily seen to be a complex affair, is not an independently developed virtue or trait but a by-product of honesty, courage, gratitude, and other human traits now to be outlined.

2. *Courage.* But as we reflect upon the question: Why do not people, lovers in particular, convey the truth? we are forced to realize that a deeper quality is missing when persons lie both to themselves and to others. If anyone analyzes himself candidly, he will be brought face to face with limitations, failures, and faults that are disappointing. He will also acknowledge solid abilities, achievements, virtues, and ideals. He will see himself in the light of the needs, demands, and opportunities he faces in his particular situation and environment. If he thinks responsibly about this mixture of good and evil, of strength and weakness, he can visualize ways of acting which he can work to realize, *starting from where he is.* It will be much easier, however, if he can minimize the limitations and failures as well as the needs and demands, or if he can develop goals requiring little starch and backbone, play everything safe, and blame others for difficulties and

breakdowns. If he does not tell the whole truth, if he acknowledges nothing but the part he likes to contemplate, the immediate path ahead will seem easier for both to see. He will not have to feel disappointment in his limitation and guilt in his willful sins.

This, after all, is the reason for weak lives, mediocre in achievement, boring and doleful in perspective, and "I'm as good as the next fellow" in rationalization. It takes courage to tell the truth. *Courage is the willingness to live for a goal despite the conscious danger of pain, of failure, of criticism.* It means the willingness to go on working despite the limitations, the willingness to be a failure, if need be, *at something worth-while.*

The two young people who marry in the glow of hope will not wait long before having their courage, their faith in action, tested. Each one will do things that disappoint the other. Each one will realize the limitations, born of past experiences in part, and perhaps native in part, that now are beginning to tell in their living together. The wife had not realized how little she knew about budgeting, of time, money, and energy, which is nevertheless essential to create the kind of home she always dreamed her husband would love. Keeping house, with its restrictions, its limited returns, means more work and imagination than she had realized. How unmercifully it exposes her likes and dislikes! The absorption of her husband in his work and other activities frequently seems cruel to her, and his particular type of impatience and discouragement, his inability to see her side of the picture, all of these, and so much more, do, indeed, tempt her to self-pity, resentfulness, and the attitude of "I don't deserve this."

To tell the truth in such a situation does not mean to

dwell on the dark side but to see the relation of these things to the real advantages in the situation and to plan action that will tend to improve the situation. The husband, in turn, might be disappointed at some of the attitudes his wife takes toward her home and toward him ("as if I were doing this for myself only"). It will be easy to moralize about the situation, much harder to see the truth in what she claims. To see the truth and face it may mean altering thinking habits and expectations in the light of the individuals they are now finding themselves to be. It will be easier to give up their ideals, to minimize their difficulties, than to change their attack or their mode of life. It will take courage to do what can be done with the assets of both together, in the light of their liabilities and their responsibilities toward each other.

3. *Mutuality in Convictions about Values.* It is at times like these, when there is conflict between what they want and what they have, between what they dream about and what they can foresee in achievable terms, that they will realize the importance of a similar scale of values. *A scale of values represents a decision as to what experiences in life come first, what values are to be sacrificed before others.* There need not be complete agreement on each point, but they must certainly agree on what each thinks is most important. How divided are the spirits of two persons who cannot agree on what it would be tragic to lose. The scale of values is what they appraise the events of life by. It even determines what they can laugh at together—and how good it is to laugh at the same things. However, if one is consistently upset about an experience that another, by his scale of values, minimizes, the seeds

of spiritual divorce take root! How can they understand each other if they find themselves violently disagreeing on the things that matter most and the things that matter least?

Let us assume that John puts financial security, physical health, physical forms of recreation, and social life consistently ahead of educational values, aesthetic values, religious and social values, and the value of character—the willingness to work consistently for approved values. He will then put work for financial returns, consistent with health, ahead of the aesthetic values of the home. The amount of money set aside for entertainment with their friends will outreach the amount spent for magazines, books, concerts, the community chest or Red Cross, and the church. Let us assume, on the other hand, that his wife's success in living means responsible use of health, money, time, and energy for the sake of improving the community in which they live. She may prefer to put time, money, and energy into Girl Scouts, the Red Cross, and church work. They will find each lacking in enthusiasm for the other's expenditures of money, time, and energy. They may find that he wants children only after they have a car and "a little pile" while she wants to get started on their family. Once the family comes, he may find himself preferring for them what she considers of lesser importance.

It is this kind of conflict of values which two persons may find after marriage as problem after problem comes up, and it is marriages of this sort that can become unholy deadlock. If he persists in putting price tags and rosy cheeks first, and she persists in preferring social service and community responsibility to the budget, the tie of

love may snap because of the incessant tug from each side.

Ideally it is the purpose of earlier friendship and courtship to discover by what linkage of values the strivings of each person are guided. How does he feel about education? Would he mortgage the house so that his son got a good surgeon, but not to see that his son went to college? Does he care so much for children that he would prefer to have three children, a Ford, and an apartment, rather than one child, a Buick, and a one-family house? How much of his time will he give to organizations serving the community? Does he feel strongly enough about religion to be anxious to make grace before meals as much a part of the expected routine as thanking his wife for a well-kept home and a good meal? How will he act when he is deeply disappointed, when the children do not meet his expectations, or when he gets run over and loses a leg? How appreciative is he of the goods he receives, or humble in those he gives?

Certainly married life is such that questions of this sort simply skim the surface. What we call the scale of values is a very abstract way of talking about the scheme of preference which persons employ as they, day by day, make the decisions that will constitute for them the stuff of life. If two people get married without being very clear about these matters, they will soon find themselves judging each other by these schemes. Unless they are both honest and courageous, they may not be willing to appraise and criticize the scale by which they have been living. The farther apart they are, the more difficult it will be for them to keep from divorcing their plans and actions from each other. This is, in some respects, the real beginning and meaning of divorce. They may find it im-

possible to knit the values they approve together. They may then go on living together legally, but they are no longer married in spirit, and their love becomes a memory. It will take honesty, courage, and many other character qualities to keep the love light burning in eyes that have become aware of such far-reaching conflicts of values.

A common scale of values, on the other hand, will help them to know what to be courageously honest about. Honesty will contribute much to their lives if they have the courage to face each situation with a willingness to find the best way out. Married persons are constantly impressed by the variety and range of choices they need to make, choices that challenge beliefs and practices they had hitherto cherished. "It's not just important to be good," she says, "it's important to be good *on time*." Does he realize that he had been somewhat negligent here, or does he, to defend his ego, "pooh-pooh" the importance of time, remind her of the times she has been late, and recall other defects in her character? And, when he does not move along as rapidly as he had hoped in his work, through no fault of his own, will he fret about that constantly and allow it to become an excuse for minimizing the values of friends and coworkers, thus becoming a source of concern to her and of pain to them? What is he likely to do when, through what might be considered negligence on her part, the two-year-old runs into the street and is killed? Can he realize that she suffers all the more because the loss of her baby might, as she believes, have been averted but for her carelessness? Can he, despite his own grief, help her to rebuild confidence in herself? Will they be able to plan other children and then not allow the death of the first to make them overcareful? Or, when the children come home with

report cards that indicate that they are not getting the most they can out of schoolwork, will there be recrimination against the teacher or the school system? Will there be greater concern for placing the blame than for understanding the possible causes (even in the parents) for the child's imperfect adjustment? Will they be able to face the differences in their children and dedicate themselves, as creatively as possible, to help them to find themselves and feel secure in the confidence and love of their parents?

In other words, given a certain degree of congruence in the pattern of values that two lovers cherish, each marriage needs to rear the structure of the home on the actual stuff provided in their own lives, in their environment and its problems. As children come, the values have to be seen *in the light of these different, developing children, and not be molds* into which the children's natures are to be crushed. Love must individualize. Another couple might have the same plan of values, but they would have different needs and abilities to build with in another changing set of circumstances. Unless there is honesty all along the way, the marriage and the home will not develop the persons involved, and much time and energy will be spent building where there are no foundations even though everything looks good. But there will not be honesty in understanding harmonies and conflicts in value, in appraising the problems confronted, unless the persons are willing to face the uncertainties of the good and the bad in their situation and then build in a way to increase the values in their lives.

If what we are saying is true, the fundamental roots for creative marriage are a more or less congruent pattern of values, a willingness to convey the truth, in good humor,

about each situation to each other, and the willingness to pursue, in the face of difficulty, pain, and danger, plans of action that take both good and bad into account.

4. *Gratitude.* Were we to leave our subject here, we should have to omit several other traits of persons that will determine the range of values and affect the quality of enjoyment. Any person who is honest with himself and his situation must recognize not only that there are many defects, but also that there are many goods. Some of these goods he may have achieved by his own effort, and some are the unearned legacy bequeathed by his forebears and his society. It is tempting to think that all goods are of our own making, that we somehow deserve them. But courageous honesty forces us to recognize the unearned increment of good in our lives—mental and physical health, a good family, a society which is the product of the "blood, sweat, and tears" of a world in which there are law and order, sunshine and flowers, as well as wild torrent and disease. There is an attitude to be taken toward the unearned increment of evil in our world, toward the state of social chaos and inequality, toward the limitations in energy and strength, toward the onset of diseases beyond human understanding, but whatever attitude one takes toward these, the honest contemplation of the undeserved and available good can bring only gratitude.

What a difference gratitude can make not only to life generally, but to married life in particular! The person who feels grateful for the good things bestowed upon him in and through his love, for the loyalty and patience and care of his beloved, for the opportunity now before him to help build a home worthy of his heritage, who sees the

blessing in the smile of a face, or the coziness of a kitchen, is the person who by that very fact can and does enjoy them more. One of our friends has endeared himself to his wife by ending every meal with, "Thank you, Miriam." Here is grace before the meal and grace after it! Moreover, here is the enrichment of his life, and hers, by the lifting of a routine act of duty into the experience of loving appreciation.

The man and woman who celebrate their marriage not only by anniversary, but by their sensitive appreciation of each other's play and work, and who will not allow themselves to be blind to the good in the world as it is, are persons who increase the power of good and diminish the sting of evil. It was this spirit which led the mother to step out from among the mourners at the grave of her eight-year-old, who had been killed by the carelessness of another boy, to say: "Father, I am so happy that I could have Richard, and all he has meant to me, for eight years." And her friends knew that she had never ceased to appreciate Richard despite some of the vexing problems he had created for her.

5. *Humility.* The grateful person has a way of enjoying the unsung blessings of life with the humble realization that he has not earned what others have produced. And he is usually all the more prepared to take the right attitude toward those goods which come into his life largely through his own effort. He is not so likely to boast of the superiority of his blessings and to "wear" his achievements with expectation of deference from others on that account. He is humble. *Humility is the willingness to accept the responsibility for the abilities one enjoys*

without falsely maximizing or minimizing the importance of one's achievements. It is as dishonest to play down one's achievements without good cause as it is to attribute unmerited value to them. The humble person views his successes as the product of the ability which he finds in himself. He does not lord it over those not equally endowed.

How noticeable is the lack of this trait in a home. The wife who must feel the world revolve around her, who does her full share of the work but proclaims the fact that others should feel lucky to have one like her around; the husband who needs to have his ego constantly nourished, caressed, or pampered—how difficult they make life for others who now have to add unnecessarily to "the things to think about." To have a kind of smug complacency about one's beautiful, brainy, and healthy children (indicative of one's own superiority!), is hard not only on those who have to live with it, but on the children themselves. The humble husband or wife shines by the cheerful and responsible way he or she does what needs to be done without expecting credit all the time. One cannot miss the steady glow, the warmth, the gratitude, the dedication in such love.

6. *Meekness.* Truthfulness, courage, gratitude, humility—each of these traits is desirable because it enables a person to deal effectively with the problems a human being encounters. But a person needs to develop at least another trait if he is to grow as he confronts unearned and undeserved limitations and evils. A real test of human adjustment to life is what a person does in the presence of disappointments, defects, errors not of his own making. If he is merely honest, he may become bitter and

disillusioned. If he has courage, he may face evils. But the temptation is to be sorry for oneself, to become bitter about "the way life has treated me." The person who succumbs to this temptation actually discourages the growth that may still be possible for him in his misfortune. He fails to quarantine the evil and therefore encourages it to spread in its effect on his personality. A source of disvalue and pain in his life is allowed to become an obstacle to the good that can be gained despite the evil.

The word in such situations is *meekness, the willingness to accept disappointment and limitations, not with docility but in the realization that the evil can be borne or at least quarantined.* The meek person is not one to look at evil through rose-colored glasses; but neither does he fail to work for present and future goods still possible. He knows that human life is so constructed that it can absorb much that is bad, provided the evil is not used as an excuse for irresponsibility toward attainable goods.

Even a superficial understanding of married life, the nurture of children, and co-operative living in a social order will recognize the need for meekness. The person who is not willing to make the most of bad situations, without self-pity or bitterness, becomes an added trial to his beloved. His wife may not be favored with health as she accepts the responsibilities of marriage, or she simply does not seem to be good at cutting corners in budgeting, or she flies off the handle with the children far more than she realizes. And, the children! The first one and the second *would* be girls, and not overbright or beautiful at that. The third child, a boy, is both bright and attractive, but what a temper the young man has! Any one

week of marriage, any one day of family life, will be crowded with undesired limitations and disappointed hopes. Some troubles may call for real marrow in the bones if the person is not going to beg off because of them. Let him become resentful, let him whine, let him expect special compensation for having to put up with all this, and the joyous love his wife felt has a difficult time re-rooting itself in such a shallow life.

What a difference it makes when this attitude toward difficulty, far from being sentimental, is one which inspires hope in those around him. If either parent can go on doing his best, even when the children are not appreciative, he is a source of inspiration for his mate and one of those persons who make a community. If he can face his own hard luck without whimpering, without coddling and "build-up," how much easier he is to live with, and how much more time and energy can go to more valuable, constructive enterprises! A couple who know meekness have learned that suffering is not the end of all opportunity but the call for reorganization, readaptation, and redoubling of effort. They face the facts before them without bravado, without minimizing the difficulties, and without minimizing their ability and obligation to do whatever they can to improve the situation.

7. *Kindness.* Meekness, then, is a virtue that fortifies life against the assaults of evil without forfeiting the good. But meekness is not enough. A positive good will toward the limitations of others is another source of power for living. *Kindness is willingness to help persons who have limitations to enjoy values they might otherwise lose.* The weak, the maimed, the underprivileged, the burdened

would miss many blessings, frequently through no fault of their own, were not other human beings willing to share their goods. The kind person is a master of life, for one really owns what he can give to another. The kind man is not satisfied by the mere fact that he does not take advantage of another's weakness. He organizes his own life and values so that others may not suffer unnecessarily. He can depend upon himself, and others can depend upon him, not to take advantage of his superior bargaining ability.

That kindness is the quality that transforms a collection of human beings into a family will be obvious. But love dries up and the roots of hate are sown when one's wife, husband, father, or child, will not help bear heavy burdens. If father takes advantage of his position, considers the weaknesses of family members an affront to him, and proceeds to subjugate them; if mother constantly reminds husband and children only of their shortcomings and does nothing to indicate that she will do her best to help alleviate their suffering, the "home" dies and the "doghouse" takes its place. Let a child feel that father and mother are really anxious for him to make good for his own sake, that they are willing to help him to accept his own deficiencies and overcome his faults so that he may improve his mode of living—such a child may never become a world-beater, but he knows that co-operation and forbearance are as important for human beings as success. What a difference it makes to feel daddy's supporting arm when he sees the report card that spells out the child's own disappointment with his ability! Persons sealed together by kindness make a family. Persons who cannot be kind are dead before their time.

8. *Forgiveness.* But even meekness and kindness take us only part of the way into the most critical situations that try the human spirit. It is one thing to face one's own limitations courageously, to share one's goods with those who can also enjoy them. But it is another thing to adopt a creative attitude toward another who has *purposely* tried to injure us, especially when we have given him no cause. It is divine to forgive. Human beings never rise beyond the struggle for mere safety until they can achieve the inner freedom to overlook the meanness of others and treat them in a way which encourages their growth.

Forgiveness is the willingness to help those who have hurt us to feel our earnest concern for their legitimate interests and values. It is more than the willingness to overlook the evil intent and action—it is the positive willingness to help the other to feel no ill will on our part. On the contrary, the "enemy" can see that the person he has hurt is anxious to see him suffer as little as possible from the results of his evil intent and action. The emphasis in forgiveness is always redemption—seeing to it, as far as one can, that the person doing evil overcomes the temptation. To exact punishment or repairing of the damage done is not the end though that may be part of the other person's redemption. The end, which must guide any action toward the evil doer, is his improvement, his availing himself of the good in his own situation, and of the good will now offered to reconstruct his life.

Such forgiveness, it will be seen, is not a namby-pamby sentimentalism. A person cannot indulge in forgiveness; he must accept his share of responsibility for growth in the life of the malefactor. A person must see to it, as far

as possible, that neither his own spirit nor that of the other is hurt any more than necessary. A person, therefore, reorganizes his own life and attitudes so that the good is emphasized in this relationship, which now proceeds as if the evil had never existed. The forgiver analyzes his own actions toward the sinner to be sure that he has not encouraged the latter to sin. Forgiveness is born of a profound realization of the imperfection of human motives and of a determination to do all in one's power to rob them of their sting.

Only those can forgive who have a deep sense of the fact that if human beings are to live together, getting the most that life can offer, they must live *with* and *for* each other's blessings and imperfections. They realize that justice can never be a mere calculation of equal rewards and punishments; that justice is, in the last analysis, the attempt of love to put itself at the disposal of the needy. Persons who can forgive are usually so sensitive to the good that is theirs, so concerned about treating others as ends in themselves, that they do not act as if the world was constructed to ensure their own happiness. They have the wisdom to see that evil is often born of false pride, of an unwillingness to undergo suffering for the sake of values. They realize that unless they forgive those who are afraid of insecurity and suffering, they are losing that crowning quality of human life, the ability to help other souls to create and enjoy goodness.

If meekness and kindness bind human beings into a family, then the forgiving spirit guards the individuals and the family from the motives that endanger every intimate relationship, the insidious desire to be master and to be secure. Peevishness, jealousy, resentment, suspicion,

the desire to be strict with others, the constant wondering about motives—all are born of an unwillingness to help others at one's possible expense. The wife whose main concern is that her husband grows in his happiness is not fingering anxiously through his life, making sure that he does not look at other women, that he does not slight her, or give too much time and energy to activities outside the home. The husband pervaded by the spirit of forgiveness is not anxious to "show who's boss," even in subtle ways, when he feels that she has carelessly hurt his interests. The mother and father who are disappointed by the choices of their children in habits, in religion, in vocation, in marriage are not so grieved and upset that they resort to threats. They will do their utmost to educate and influence their children to take paths they honestly judge to be wisest, and they will not shirk that responsibility with the glib formula, "It's their life." But they are willing to leave the ultimate decision with the children.

However, that is not enough. Even when the children have gone against the counsel of their parents, when they have "wasted their substance," they will know that mother and father will do anything at any time (consistent with their own ultimate principles) to help them build the best into their lives. In families like this love is never a whip for exacting submission. In families like this fear for self is not the main incentive for discipline and guidance. Only in families like this do human beings grow. For they have learned to think of other human beings not simply as means to their *own* satisfaction. Persons are persons, worthy of our best, and a challenge to our efforts.

And, thus, the ends of our circle meet each other even though the circle excludes many important subjects and

barely includes others. But it may be that the approach is clear. The human venture in sex, love, and marriage is a venture; it is a human venture in the development of human beings. The adolescent who begins to feel the new impetus for sexual expression, for companionship, and for creative living is himself the product of a home. If in his earlier years the atmosphere of the home supports and clarifies the meaning of mutual love and personal growth, the mainsprings of life are released. As he grows older, he becomes increasingly aware of the drama enacted in the lives of his parents through long years of home building. A child represents in a unique way the growing edge of all that a home makes possible. If that home is built on selfish motives—let it wall in the generous and close out the tender feelings, let it praise a calculating and "enlightened" egoism, let it be conventional and have little regard for the social good, let it pride itself upon its achievements and neglect its responsibilities—be not surprised if it produces lovers of personal comfort and ease, persons who are always suspicious of others and never willing to postpone an immediate value for self for the sake of the common good. Marriage is the marriage of persons and a venture in the growth of persons. If it brings together lovers who care about what happens to persons, it brings forth children who are nourished in love and dedicated to the building of a social order in which persons can continue to grow.

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